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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents descriptions of the 22 Illinois schools that were identified by the Best Practices and Resource Committee of the Right to Read Initiative as providing leadership and learning in the area of best practices in reading. The description of each school's program includes demographic data; data on which of the 14 best practices in reading the school implements; implementation strategies; which of the English language arts standards adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education the best practice addresses; teacher support; resources; evidence for success; and contact information. Appendixes contain a list of the 14 best practices in reading; a list and map of the 22 Leadership and Learning sites; a list of sites and their methods for sharing with other schools; and an on-site visit observation/recording instrument. (RS)

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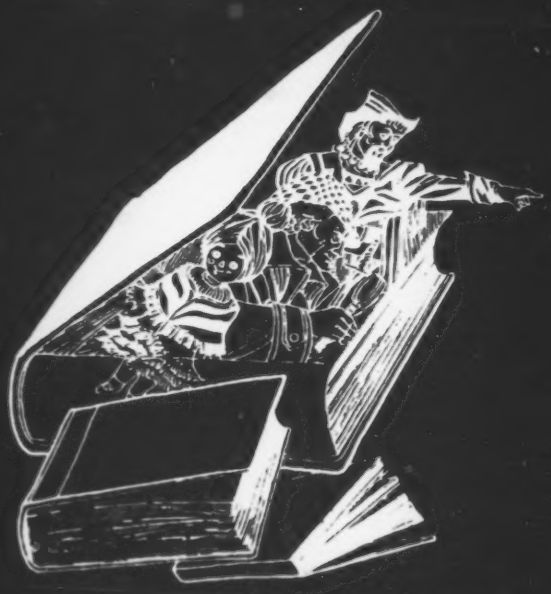
Leadership and Learning Sites:

Program Descriptions for Best Practices in Reading

Illinois State Board of Education



1998-1999

Right to Read Initiative

CS 013 665

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Illinois State Board of Education
Right to Read Initiative

Leadership and Learning Sites: Program Descriptions for Best Practices in Reading

1998-99

Leadership and Learning Sites: Program Descriptions for Best Practices in Reading

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Foreword

In December 1996, the Illinois State Board of Education launched the ***Illinois Right to Read Initiative,*** which focuses on four key strategies to improve reading and literacy:

- Communicate information on how children learn to read and reading programs that work,
- Improve the ability of educators to teach children to read,
- Mobilize partners to join with educators to improve reading, and
- Direct resources to support reading improvement.

The research of the past decade illuminates the way children learn to read and write and how we can enhance that process. The Best Practices and Resources Committee of the Right to Read Initiative has conducted an extensive review of this research and identified 14 best practices to guide Illinois schools in creating a balanced reading program in our schools for every child. The purpose of this document is to provide teachers and administrators with useful information about schools that have demonstrated a commitment to these best practices.

It is incumbent upon all educators to be open to what works best for our children. Many schools across Illinois have successful reading and writing programs that embrace the 14 best practices outlined in this document. I applaud these schools. I ask you to examine your efforts and make any necessary instructional changes to meet the challenge of improving the literacy of all students.

Glenn W. M^{c}Gee
State Superintendent of Education

Introduction

In May 1998, the State Board of Education announced a request for proposals (RFP) from funds provided under the Illinois Right to Read Initiative. One purpose of this RFP was to solicit information about schools/districts which were implementing at least two of the 14 Best Practices in Reading (refer to Appendix A), as identified by the Best Practices and Resources Committee.

After reading and approval of these applications by the Committee, the grants were awarded to 31 applicants. One contingency to accepting the grant was the expectation of an onsite visit by two-person teams of representatives from the Best Practices and Resources Committee, ISBE field advisors, and ISBE reading coaches. The purpose of the visits was to observe the best practices in the district, school or classroom setting and interview teachers who are implementing the practices, and discuss the relationship of the best practices to the school's and/or district's comprehensive reading program. (The onsite observation and recording instrument is included in Appendix D.)

After these visits were completed, the Committee then recommended 22 of the sites (listed in Appendix B) to provide ***leadership and learning*** in the area of reading best practices. These leadership and learning sites are pleased to welcome visitors, mentor other schools, present at conferences/meetings, and/or provide workshops for schools or regions. (Refer to Appendix C for a matrix of the site, best practices implemented, type of district/school, geographic area, and type of services.)

The Best Practices and Resource Committee realizes that schools/districts other than the sites listed in this publication are focused on literacy development of their students. This publication is presented as a resource and starting point for the dialog on literacy through increased awareness of the many effective strategies used throughout Illinois. The school or district developed the program descriptions in this document when making their initial application for the grant. Information about current practices is available by contacting the site directly. Other districts and schools are encouraged to share their practices and experiences on the ISBE homepage at www.isbe.state.il.us by accessing the Right to Read heading.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON DISTRICT 125 / Adlai E. Stevenson High School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 3800	Implemented at Grade Levels: 9 – 12
District/School Type: Urban	Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning
Socioeconomic Level: 1% low income	Best Practice 4: Collaboration /Reflection
Ethnicity: 48% white, 2% Afro-American, 1% Hispanic, 13% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: District Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Teachers of world history, health, English, and science at Adlai E. Stevenson High School discuss activities to engage students in the reading process throughout the year. In assessing their current practices for teaching reading, only a slight improvement was found in ACT reading scores. IGAP scores declined as well with a lower percentage of students exceeding state expectations. The English Department also uses the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) as another assessment measure. Teachers from each department have developed and implemented improvement plans. These teachers have made presentations at conferences to show how they model pre-reading strategies, monitor reading comprehension during the process, and experiment with more authentic means of assessment, application and synthesis. Classroom teachers emphasize reading process activities as part of the regular daily instruction. These activities focus on previewing before reading, setting a purpose for reading, annotating the text, summarizing and questioning during and after reading.

Description of Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning to Create Independence through Student-Owned Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works

STATE GOAL 5: *Use the language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

Teachers introduce and model pre-reading strategies before students read literature and textbooks. Teachers generate and employ reading comprehension activities during the reading process. Teachers generate alternative and authentic assessment tools after reading and instruct students in previewing methods such as exploring the various elements of a book (e.g., cover, table of contents). Comprehension is monitored through student note taking, text annotation, outlining, and student-generated questions. Students are called upon to apply reading skills to new texts, develop response journals or reading logs, and participate in class discussions or debates.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

The reading coordinator is trained in English, world history and health education. Foreign Language teachers also received inservice on reading strategies. The English director trained teachers on various reading alternative assessment tools. Teachers are trained on the reading process especially the pre-reading stage. During inservice time, teachers in several departments were trained in pre-reading strategies as applied to both fiction and non-fiction (textbooks). These inservice sessions took place throughout the school year in various formats.

Resources

Two reading coordinators were assigned a reduced teaching load to train teachers and serve as a resource. A significant amount of money (approximately $25,000) was allocated to purchase books so students could learn to annotate as they read. Teachers were released from their classes to attend workshops or meetings on reading strategies. Teachers in different departments were inserviced at different times and in different ways, some during formal inservice days, others during curriculum team release time schedules.

Evidence of Success

Success is measured through students' class work (i.e., reading guides, reading journals, annotated texts, class discussion), ITED reading test results, ACT reading test results, and IGAP reading test results. Students demonstrate more active and engaged reading behaviors, and improvements on standardized test scores are expected.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Standardized Tests ☒ Journals

Description of Best Practice 4: Collaboration and Reflection

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses – Same as for Best Practice 3

Implementation Strategies

Teachers are members of on-going internal curriculum teams in all departments. Teachers from various departments engage in curriculum revision. English, history and science teachers have begun to reflect upon their role as reading instructors as a result of inservice sessions. The "Summer Reading Initiative" developed the trainer of trainers model that helped all teachers develop skills in teaching reading. The 1998-99 school year was the initial year of implementation, and the school is in early stages of adopting reading initiatives.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

The administration team has provided the time and guidance that enabled teachers to engage in critical discourse on reading and reflect upon curriculum and instruction. The high school district and its underlying sender schools all committed summer curriculum time and money to teachers who were willing to become "reading trainers" in their respective school buildings and departments. Time was also allotted for inservice throughout the year to assure that the staff would receive information and inservice from the "peer trainers." Teachers are encouraged to write their own professional growth plans and participate in weekly collaborative curriculum/teaching teams. Administrators sponsored professional growth and alternative evaluation for teachers that elicited critical reflection.

Resources

Teachers were released periodically from part of the teaching day to meet with colleagues to reflect on and plan curriculum. Department chairs and coordinators helped teachers reflect on their teaching methods. Through the teacher evaluation/classroom observation process, department chairs encourage teachers to reflect and assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Team leaders were released from a fifth class to lead teachers through a process of collaboration on curricular ideas.

Evidence of Success

As a result of teacher collaboration and reflection, improvements have been noted in courses, instruction, scope and sequence of curriculum although no actual data have been recorded.

For more information, contact:

Stevenson High School District 125
Wendell Schwartz, Director of Communication Arts
One Stevenson Drive
Lincolnshire, IL 60069
847/634-4000, ext. 252

ANNA COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 37

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 275	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-2
District/School Type: Rural	Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning
Socio-Economic Level: 50% low income	Best Practice 8: Appropriate Instructional Levels
Ethnicity: 96% white, 2% Afro-American, 2% Hispanic	Scope/Setting for the Practices: Grade Level School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

The balanced reading program at Lincoln Elementary School consists of a literature-based basal series, Accelerated Reader, and the Title I Early Literacy Program. A team of three Reading Recovery teachers along with each classroom teacher in grades K-2 provide small group instruction in the Title I room for all students at their instructional reading level. A five-day model was developed which includes a team planning session, reading strategy session, guided reading, familiar rereading, language lessons, shared and interactive reading, running records on new text and independent extension activities. Training activities for teachers and parents provided throughout the year are an integral part of the team approach. Ongoing evaluation is achieved through student portfolios. In addition to a literature-based basal series, the Accelerated Reader program is used extensively. In kindergarten and early first grade, the books are read to the children. Beginning the second semester of first grade the children read the Accelerated Reader books and respond to comprehension questions on the computer program.

A phonemic awareness component has recently been added to the primary program. The new auditory skills obtained through this program are used to enhance the existing early literature program on a daily basis in the classrooms, the reading room and the speech/language therapy setting. Various types of phonemic awareness tasks are implemented, e.g., auditory bombardment, rhyming, auditory discrimination of sounds that are different, blending spoken sounds into words, isolating sounds in words, counting word segments, counting phonemes, segmenting words into sounds and sound manipulation tasks.

The district speech/language pathologist administers pre- and post-phonemic awareness screening assessments and/or tests to identify auditory skill levels and to track the progress of students. School aides, parents and community volunteers are trained to facilitate these objectives in students needing additional support. This best practices program augments the existing balanced literacy program and presents explicit instruction in phonemic awareness. Considerable research supports our expectations of improved reading skills and progress.

Description of Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning to Create Independence Through Student Owned Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure

- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4 *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5 *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Team collaboration is scheduled on a weekly basis to discuss student progress, assess group placement, and determine instructional strategies and materials needed to accomplish goals. The team assesses students' instructional levels to preplan weekly instruction. During instruction, running records of students' text reading are taken and evaluated to access progress for that week. Following instruction, discussion of this assessment determines the focus of instruction for the following week.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Three teachers have received Reading Recovery training. All classroom teachers and Title I/ Reading Recovery teachers have participated in training sessions with the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader on use of running records. All classroom teachers and Title I/Reading Recovery teachers have attended Wright Group Training (*Reading Assessment for Instructional Planning: Using Running Records as decision-making tools*). Reading specialists have trained classroom teachers on techniques used to analyze running records using three context areas of meaning, structure and visual cues.

Resources

Time: One 25-minute time period per week is allowed for team collaboration. Money: Approximately $20,000 of Title I and district funds are used to purchase books and materials annually. People: Title I Reading Recovery teachers, classroom teachers, and instructional aides provide reading instruction and support. Technology/Equipment: Computer, printers and copiers are needed to support the Accelerated Reader software.

Evidence of Success

Individual student reading level graphs are updated weekly. Students have made progress in levels within the Accelerated Reader program.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

- ☒ Pre- and post-Measures
- ☒ Teacher observation/reporting
- ☒ Surveys/Interviews
- ☒ Performance Assessment
- ☒ Standardized Tests
- ☒ Teacher observation/reporting

Description of Best Practice 8: Appropriate Instructional Levels

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English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

Implementation Strategies

Weekly reviews of student running records on leveled books are conducted to determine appropriate instructional reading levels. Graphs are charted weekly on each student's instructional reading level. Teachers have received training on book selection to determine text reading levels and guided reading strategies including developmentally appropriate mini-language lessons. Testing is done at the beginning, middle and end of the school year on student reading levels and Student Portfolios.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

See section under Best Practice 3.

Resources

Time: Staff development sessions throughout the school year; workshop training sessions; site visits to research other schools' best practices; 25-minute small group sessions daily in which students are working at their instructional reading levels with a trained reading specialist and their classroom teacher. Money: Title I and district funds. People: 3 Title I Reading Recovery trained teachers, 12 classroom teachers, and a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader.

Evidence of Success

Teachers assess students weekly in small groups through running records on previously introduced text. All first grade students are tested at the end of the year using the Text Reading Assessment from the Reading Recovery Observation Survey to determine their independent reading levels. In the May 1998 assessment, 74 percent of first grade students scored two years above grade level. Evaluation of each student's independent reading level occurs through the use of team meetings between the classroom teacher and reading teachers. Each student's instructional reading level is recorded and graphed to show progression of reading levels.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre- and post-Measures ☒ Performance Assessment ☒ Standardized Tests
☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Surveys/Interviews

For more information, contact:

Anna C.C. School District 37
301 South Green Street
Anna, IL 62906
618/833-6812

Karen Hubbs, Title 1 (Contact Person)
Lincoln Elementary School
108 Warren Street
Anna, IL 62906
618/833-6851

DES PLAINES DISTRICT 62 / Plainfield School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 425 Grades: K-5	Implemented at Grade Levels: 1-5
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 4: Collaboration /Reflection
Socioeconomic Level: 42% low income	Best Practice 9: Reading for Purpose
Ethnicity: 45% white, 3% Afro-American 36% Hispanic, 16% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Based on district curriculum and state standards, staff have been working to implement best practices in reading instruction. Teachers at Plainfield School collaborate in teams at multiage grade levels. Classroom teachers and special services team members also collaborate in planning and instructing students in their classrooms. Training has been provided on the use of strategies to develop fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, self-assessment and a love of reading. Strategies being implemented schoolwide include reading/writing workshop, conferencing with individual students, journal writing in all subject areas, vocabulary development throughout word walls, word sorts, and making words, along with a schoolwide focus on specific meaning-making reading skills. QAR and Think Alouds are used to help students understand that reading is constructing meaning from print.

Description of Best Practice 4: Collaboration and Reflection

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use the language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Teachers work in teams of multiage groupings (currently K-2, 3-4, 5-6.) The LDR/BDR teachers and assistant, speech, Title I reading and ESL staff form the special services team. Teams meet weekly to collaborate, plan educational experiences for students, discuss teaching strategies to improve student achievement, and evaluate progress. Special services personnel work in one classroom at each multiage grade level and collaborate with those teachers to assist all regular education initiative (REI) students. The principal area of focus for this collaborative process has been to improve student achievement in reading.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Representatives of each grade-level team and the special services teachers have attended the REI Level I and II workshops. With this year's REI grant, a reading consultant was hired to work with each team on literacy development and strategies for increasing students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. The consultant conducted half-day workshops with each team. Follow-up sessions with the entire staff provided time for reflection and consensus building on specific reading strategies to be implemented at all grade levels.

Professional development has been provided in a variety of ways. The entire staff has worked with a reading consultant, Barbara Dress, over the past two years. She has presented all staff workshops, but the most effective model has been at the team level. Substitutes were hired to provide released time for each team to work in a small group setting with the consultant. The staff then met as a whole to discuss the strategies presented and to agree on several that would be implemented school-wide at every grade level. These strategies were word walls, predicting/story mapping with vocabulary, word sorts, bookmarks, and posters with "fix up" strategies to use during reading, QAR, flexible grouping, and guided reading.

After several months of implementing these strategies, Mrs. Dress worked with the staff again in the fall of 1998 on a team-by-team basis, modeling the strategies in the classroom and conducting small group discussions with each team about the implementation. As a result of this process, the staff selected guided reading as the principal focus for this year's school improvement/staff development. Providing daily instruction at each child's instructional level and opportunities to practice reading at his/her independent reading level strategies every day is the school-wide goal.

In addition to the work with Mrs. Dress, another consultant, Dr. Roger Farr of the University of Indiana, provided a workshop for the entire staff prior to the start of the 1998-99 school year. Dr. Farr presented reading strategies designed to develop comprehension and also worked with the staff on portfolio assessment, particularly in the area of reading. Staff members also attended full-day workshops on guided reading. The Title I teacher provided training for staff in the use of running records as a diagnostic assessment of reading levels for the guided reading program.

While reading and writing workshops continue to be an integral part of the literacy instruction program at Plainfield School, this new focus on guided reading has added an excitement to the reading program that is very evident in the classrooms and in the teachers' discussions of student progress. Children who were struggling with reading are now enthusiastic and most importantly, are seeing themselves as readers.

Resources

By teaming each special services teacher with two to three classroom teachers, the school is able to provide more in-class invention time in reading instruction for each classroom and collaborate more effectively and efficiently. This model has also facilitated classroom teacher team collaboration. The REI grant money enabled the initial planning and provided staff development in reading instruction during 1997-98. Some staff development money is used to provide one half-day per semester for each team.

All of the year's staff development money (approximately $7000) has been dedicated to the area of reading instruction. Outside presenters (Barbara Dress and Roger Farr) have been brought in. Staff members have attended workshops on guided reading, developing phonemic awareness, assisting struggling readers at the intermediate levels, and other reading instruction topics. Workshops are being planned for June with Beveraly Eisele and/or Roger Farr.

In addition to the staff development budget, the school receives funding through Title 1 for one reading teacher and 2.5 Project Prevent tutors. The Title 1 teacher works as a member of the Special Services team in the collaborative services delivery model. She also provides ongoing training and support for teachers. This year she has focused on guided reading, specific reading strategies, use of running records, and use of individual reading inventories. The Best Practices in Reading grant provided funding for a summer project to select leveled materials for the guided reading program, purchase of reading materials, and staff attendance at a workshop on guided reading.

The most important resource is the staff's commitment to the improvement of student reading achievement. Through the collaborative model, teachers work together to share information about student learning, successful strategies, and ways to improve instruction. School staff feel that this collaborative model is the most successful staff development opportunity.

Evidence of Success

All staff members have benefited from each other's strengths, hence the students have been exposed to better teaching strategies across the curriculum especially in the area of reading. A staff survey after the first year of this organizational plan was very positive. Assessments to measure specific effects on student learning are being developed. Classroom teachers and special services teachers with expertise in the teaching of reading have been able to provide staff development for their colleagues via the collaborative structure of the school. Survey responses also indicated that students with low reading abilities are receiving more direct assistance in reading strategies and vocabulary development.

Each team analyzes the data on student achievement on an ongoing basis as well as in formulating the annual school improvement plan. The kinds of data used are standardized and state tests, teacher-made tests, observational checklists, portfolios that include rubrics for assessing student products, individual student reading/writing conferences, and an academic checklist of grade-level performance on eight areas of reading and writing achievement. The use of running records was started this year to provide specific data on the students' reading levels and progress throughout the year. Individual reading inventories are also being given to each child to provide concrete data on achievement and progress. To date, these data are incomplete, but early indications show that students are achieving at a higher level and more importantly, are beginning to view themselves as readers.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation	☒ Pre - post Measures	☒ Performance Assessment
☒ Teacher observation/reporting		☒ Standardized Tests
☒ Products evaluated against a rubric		☒ Surveys/Interviews

Description of Best Practice 9: Reading for Purpose

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4. *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

Implementation Strategies

Literature circles provide multiple book choices for reading. Daily Reading/Writing workshops allow student ownership of *topics and experiences* at instructional levels of reading and writing. Cooperative grouping is used for literature circles, and students are grouped at their instructional level for guided reading instruction. Non-fiction and fiction materials, reading response journals, student self-assessment and portfolio assessments are used. All portfolios include a process writing piece, running records to track students' progress in reading, a reading log and a student self-assessment. All of the indicated strategies are integrated daily in each classroom, in reading/writing workshops and the literature circles.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

District and school staff development is provided on reading strategies and on portfolio assessment. The Plainfield staff development/school improvement team schedules staff development sessions every Thursday morning before school. As staff members attend workshops or take classes on reading instruction, information on best practices is shared with the entire staff. The district provides additional support via staff development sessions such as the workshop with Barbara Dress. Ms. Dress provided training for the staff in half-day released time sessions. Each team (K-2, 3-4, 5-6 and special services) benefited from this small group staff development. The special services team had one additional session with Ms. Dress to discuss ways they can facilitate the implementation of specific reading instructional strategies in the classrooms. The special services team then acts as facilitators in the classrooms. Barbara also worked with the staff at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year to model strategies in the classrooms at each team's grade level and then met with grade level teams to discuss the reading instructional strategies modeled. The school continues to focus on portfolio assessment for the 1998-99 school year. The goal is to enable students to assess and reflect on their own learning.

Resources

The resources used to implement this practice include school and district staff development funds, a REI grant, language arts funds, Title I teacher working as a resource to staff, conducting workshops and sharing strategies. The school annual budget for staff development is approximately $7000. The REI grant provided an additional $2000 and language arts funds of approximately $1500 were applied to staff development in reading. For technology as a resource, computers are used for word processing as part of a writer's workshop in grades 4-6 and for tracking student test scores on standardized tests and local assessments on a database.

Evidence of Success

Success is evidenced through student response journals, reading logs, portfolios, student self-assessments, and student-led conferences with parents. Through all of these assessments, students are becoming more reflective about their own learning. Students are able to explain to parents and others why they selected specific items for their portfolios, where they have made progress, and also set goals with the teacher and parents for future learning. The student response journals are used for ongoing assessment of progress as are individual conferences between the teacher and the student and reading logs. While these data are extremely useful in

a diagnostic application for monitoring student progress, staff are studying ways to quantify and track these data and report out to the school board and other interested parties.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

- ☒ Process Evaluation
- ☒ Pre - post Measures
- ☒ Performance Assessment
- ☒ Teacher observation/reporting
- ☒ Standardized Tests
- ☒ Products evaluated against a rubric
- ☒ Surveys/Interviews

For more information, contact:

Maxine M. Hubbard, Principal
Des Plaines Elementary District 62
Plainfield School
777 Algonquin Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018
847/824-1366
847/824-1303 (fax)

DOWNERS GROVE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 99

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 5000 Grades: 9-12	Implemented at Grade Levels: 9 – 12
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 2: Assessment
Socio-Economic Level: 9% low income	Best Practice 10: Reading Comprehension
Ethnicity: 79% white, 6% Afro-American, 4% Hispanic, 11% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: District Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Following a year-long study of reading abilities of all 5,000 high school district students by a 22-member committee of teachers from every content area, the school board approved a multi-year plan to assess student growth, create a staff development plan to improve student reading and writing, modify curriculum and instructional practices and develop a comprehensive program to improve reading and critical thinking in all subject areas across all four grade levels.

After exhaustive analysis of student performance data, implementation of this program began with intensive voluntary staff training in Project CRISS (Creating Independence through Student-Owned Strategies). This program focuses on teaching students how to team through reading, writing, speaking, and listening in all curricular areas. Seventy-five district teachers, who have contact with more than 5000 students, have completed training in eight months.

Following training, teachers create materials, refine instructional delivery methods and revise assessments. They plan instruction using strategies that can be used before, during and after reading. To ensure follow-up and support, trained staff who are reading teachers serve as facilitators. They help plan lessons, peer coach, and co-teach. Networking opportunities, such as district-funded luncheons, provide teachers ongoing opportunities for collaboration and reflection. This networking continues during paid summer curriculum development workshops. Teachers use their classroom action research, as well as data from IGAP, PLAN, ACT, CTBS, and GPA to continuously monitor student progress and direct instruction.

Description of Best Practice 2: Assessment to Inform Instruction

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

The district systematically assesses student reading and critical thinking abilities on two levels. First, the district compiles a strategic learning database annually, which correlates for each student: CTBS scores at the 9th/IIth grades, IGAP scores at the 8th/10th/11th grades with PLAN test scores, ACT sub-test scores and G.P.A. by subject area as well as by overall G.P.A. This information is disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and has become the foundation of each high school's School Improvement Plan. At the beginning of this year, each teacher will also see student reading scores on his/her class lists, which will enable each teacher to assess individual student growth throughout the year.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

All faculty members attended a special teacher institute on October 10, 1997, explaining the on-going statistical work that monitors the progress of the reading and strategic learning program. District administrators and lead teachers attended an ASCD workshop on action research. Nationally known consultant Richard Sagor helped these staff members design various action-research projects.

On a classroom level, all Project CRISS trained subject area teachers regularly assess their students' abilities through Project CRISS action research models. Additional classroom teachers will learn how to conduct classroom action research as they receive formal Project CRISS training.

Resources

A statistical consultant was hired to compile and disaggregate the data. The district strategic learning facilitator analyzes these data and creates a full report for administrators and teachers who interpret the findings as part of the School Improvement Process. Teachers are paid for summer training sessions. Both campuses host networking and recognition lunches for teachers. In February, the Board of Education hosted an entire Board workshop devoted to strategic learning. Teachers were asked to present the results of their assessment efforts and received positive reinforcement for their work.

Evidence of Success

Action research and student reactions to processing journals are positive. Teacher presentations to the Board of Education have clearly indicated improvement in student performance and classroom engagement. The systematic conduct of classroom action research to assess student learning is a critically important element of Project CRISS training. Further, it is projected that the strategic learning database reformulated next year will already begin to show improvement in student IGAP, PLAN, and ACT scores as well as G.P.A. in individual subject areas.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

- ☒ Process Evaluation
- ☒ Performance Assessment
- ☒ Teacher observation/reporting
- ☒ Standardized Tests

Description of Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension Skills and Strategies

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English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems a communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Students receive direct instruction in a variety of comprehension strategies in all content areas. Project CRISS trained teachers develop lessons and materials that include such strategies as K-W-L, free form, concept and power mapping, content frames, one-sentence summary, semantic feature analysis, anticipation and reaction guides, and self-monitoring journal entries. Some disciplines, such as science, have reduced their content core to allow more time to teach the process involved in strategic learning.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Project CRISS (Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies) is an intensive three-day workshop designed to help students learn more effectively throughout the curriculum. To date, 75 District teachers have participated in this workshop designed by Carol Santa, President of the International Reading Association. The National Diffusion Network validated this professional growth program in 1985. Project CRISS is now being used by teachers in 43 states and has helped over one million students.

Resources

Time is needed for teachers to develop materials, network to share ideas, and continue study in the area of strategic learning. Substitutes are provided for one day for trained teachers to work in small groups to create strategic learning materials. Teachers are paid workshop rates to do such work on the weekends or in the summer. Also, funds are used for staff to attend additional strategic learning conferences. The summer workshop rate for teachers is approximately $19. In addition, teachers are recognized for their work with other teachers in providing examples of how CRISS strategies work.

Evidence of Success

Student achievement has improved in many classes, according to their teachers, and student feedback has been positive when assessing the value of various strategies. Students often select the strategy that helps them learn most effectively, and teachers report greater student engagement. Action research, as well as standardized testing, continues to be used to assess the program.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Teacher observation/reporting

For more information, contact:

William F. Renner, Assistant Superintendent
Downers Grove High School District 99
6301 Springside Avenue
Downers Grove, IL 60516
630/271-6611
630/271-6666 (fax)

EDWARDSVILLE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 7 / Edwardsville Middle School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 1,496 Grades 6-8 District/School Type: Suburban Socioeconomic Level: 13.3% low income Ethnicity: 88.2% white, 9.2% Afro-American, 4% Hispanic, 2.1% Asian, .2% Native American	Implemented at Grade Levels: 6-7-8 Best Practice 7: Variety of Genre Best Practice 9: Reading for Purpose Scope/Setting for the Practices: School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

The entire Edwardsville Middle School's reading program has been constructed within the last year. The 1997-98 school year was the first year for the Edwardsville Middle School itself. Therefore, the reading program was in its infancy. For the 1998-99 school year, all content-area teachers have provided reading instruction. The students are rotated within their teams every six weeks. The content-area teachers focus on their area of expertise, e.g., social studies – current events, historical fiction; math – numbers in the newspaper; science –reading about inventions. The English teachers use the literature circles with the students, and students are required to read and respond to literature group books by writing in their literature circle response journals. Students also respond to the reading by discussing within their literature circle groups. These practices have been implemented within the middle school only within the last school year and are not yet district wide.

Description of Best Practice 7: Variety of Genre

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

Implementation Strategies

Literature Circles are small, tempora.y discussion groups that broaden students' reading and writing experiences by allowing students the opportunity to read and reflect upon various types of literature. Eighth-grade students read entire novels during Literature Circles rather than just excerpts from novels that are usually found in literature anthologies. Assuming different roles within the group, students form, explain, and support questions and predictions (I.C.3a). Students discuss with their peers the style of the literature, elements of the writing, and the authors point of view (Goal I.C.3b). In addition, reader response journal writing allows students to interpret, analyze, and respond in personal and creative points of view (Goal 2.B.3a). Students also create group projects that can take a variety of forms (4.B.3b).

Literature Circles and journal writing allow students the opportunity to read for purpose, build their comprehension, and broaden their reading and writing experiences by giving students the ability to discuss what they have read with their peers in small group settings with the teacher as facilitator rather than leader. This type of learning environment allows students to analyze and express both orally and in written form their individual and creative points of view regarding various authors and their styles of writing, story line, and characters, as well as the students' personal feelings about what they have read.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

The literature circles strategy is especially useful because the middle school experience is new to students and teachers, and it promotes a learning environment where students read and discuss with their peers in a small group setting. The studies from Project Write, a Goals 2000 project, exposed the literature circle techniques to many middle school teachers and the practice is now implemented within sixth through eighth grades. Teachers serve informally as mentors to other teachers interested in implementing these strategies and also offer ongoing support in the transition from whole group instruction to a more student-directed learning process. Thus far, professional development has been informal, done teacher-to-teacher, and based on teacher interest and request. Teachers continue to learn from classroom experiences and through the support of the network of teachers using these strategies.

Seven middle school teachers (a total of 36 teachers district-wide) have participated in Project WRITE, a Goals 2000 initiative, to increase student achievement in reading and writing. Through this district-wide project, teachers have the opportunity to study various strategies and best practices in reading and writing. Teachers believe literature circles and journal writing broaden students' reading and writing experiences and firmly link to state and district standards, such as student interpretation, analysis, and reflection.

Resources

Time: At the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, only a few middle grade teachers had heard of literature circles and the benefits. However, due to the newness of the middle school setting, the reading program was still relatively dormant. One 8th grade teacher, who had experience using literature circles in an elementary setting, shared the technique with other teachers in the middle school. Due to an immediate interest, teachers began to discuss how this technique could be implemented school-wide. In the 1998-99 school year, the language arts teachers who received inservice on the strategy, began to teach reading classes using literature circles. Teachers have volunteered personal time to develop and implement literature circles and reader response.

Money: Literature sets used to implement literature circles have been acquired in a number of ways. Some sets of books were found in the school library; however, these sets had limited titles and reading levels. Retired teachers donated books to the school or individual teachers. Teachers have also purchased books by using monthly book orders or from their own money. To implement literature circles within all three grade levels (grades 6, 7, 8), many new and challenging books are needed.

People: Several District 7 teachers at the Edwardsville Middle School are implementing reader response. This type of response incorporates participating in the discussion of the assigned reading and writing in journals about what has been read.

Evidence of Success

The evidence of success is found by assessing students' growth as readers and responders. While participating in literature circles, students learn to respond not just as summarizers but rather as complex connectors to what they have read. Students start to create journal entries that combine their reactions to what they have read rather than just mentioning one aspect of the literature. Students start to look at not only what but also how the author wrote the text and

how it compares to other literature the student has read. Teachers assess through group discussion and oral sharing of the journals. Students create better-rounded entries rather than flat one-dimensional summaries. This success has been noted with classroom anecdotal records.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Performance Assessment ☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Surveys/Interviews

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Description of Best Practices 9: Reading for Purpose

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.*

- Produce documents that convey a clear understanding and interpretation of ideas and information and display focus, organization, elaboration and coherence.

STATE GOAL 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

Implementation Strategies

Refer to Best Practice 7.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Refer to Best Practice 7.

Resources

Refer to Best Practice 7.

Evidence of Success:

Refer to Best Practice 7.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Performance Assessment ☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Surveys/Interviews
☒ Other: Individual student projects, e.g., dioramas, games, posters, mobiles, newspaper stories.

For more information, contact:

Lynda Andre / Kristen Frisbee
Ed Hightower, Superintendent
Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7
708 St. Louis Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025
618/646-1182
618/692-7423 (fax)

EVANSTON DISTRICT 65 / Martin Luther King Jr. Laboratory School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 650 Grades: K-8	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-8
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 1: Word Analysis
Socioeconomic Level: 18% low income	Best Practice 12: Integration
Ethnicity: 52% white, 47% Afro-American	Scope/Setting for the Practices: Grade Level

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Martin Luther King Jr. Laboratory School is an integrated public school in Evanston. The K-8 school of 650 children has special education inclusion for physically handicapped, mentally handicapped and cross-categorical students.

King Lab teachers are committed to sharing with others, including filming classroom instruction. Visits from other teachers are encouraged. The reading program includes use of an anthology, fiction, and nonfiction trade books.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systematic Word Analysis, Including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

Implementation Strategies

Teachers explicitly teach skills and strategies through direct instruction in phonics and word analysis, using word sorts and word walls. Vocabulary is taught through use of literature. Trade books are used to develop fluency.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Teachers have received inservice in using assessments: letter identification, concepts about print (Marie Clay), and the Morris Developmental Spelling checklist. Teachers are learning to use running records and analysis through miscue. The Literacy Committee is comprised of teachers and sponsors teacher discussion groups. Teachers discuss children's literature authors.

Resources

The district purchased the Scholastic series. School funds purchase trade books and readers (e.g., Sunshine, Wright) to provide children with opportunities to develop fluency. The library committee sponsors fundraisers to buy trade books.

Evidence of Success

IGAP scores indicate 80 percent of the children meet or exceed standards. Comprehension has increased. The number of children who qualify for the district remedial reading program is low by grade 3 (6 out of 79 children in grade 3.)

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success ☒ Standardized Tests

Description of Best Practice 12: Integration

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: ***Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.***

- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

Implementation Strategies

In grade 2, children use technology to develop HyperCards to describe research on dinosaurs. In grade 5, after study of ancient civilizations, students develop models of ancient civilization based on criteria for democratic government, economics and agricultural standards. In grade 7, students read non-fiction books for an energy unit in science and share findings with class. In grade 8, students read nonfiction trade books on personal stories of the holocaust and write journal reflections.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Teachers in grades 7 and 8 have non-fiction study sessions with faculty members from National Louis University.

Resources

Three faculty from National Louis University - Ken Kantor, Juno Yukoto and Donna Ogle have provided professional development. Library books were ordered through teacher-allocated funds. Fundraisers were used to purchase a non-fiction collection. For technology as a resource, children in grade 2 use technology to develop HyperCards.

Evidence of Success

Children's response to units and interest were collected. IGAP scores indicate 80 percent of children meet or exceed standards.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

Lynn McCarthy, Ph.D., Principal (Contact Person)
Martin Luther King Jr. Lab. School
2424 Lake Street
Evanston, IL 60201
847/492-7876 847/492-7244 (fax)

Debra Hill, Superintendent
Evanston School District 65
1314 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

HARLEM CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 122

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 555 Grades: K-1	Implemented at Grade Levels: PreK-1
District/School Type: Urban	Best Practice 1: Word Analysis
Socioeconomic Level: 14% low income	Best Practice 2: Assessment
Ethnicity: 94.1% white, 1.7% Afro-American, 2.5% Hispanic, 1.7% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: District Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

The district-wide practices of K-1: The curriculum at the kindergarten and first grade level is constructed and driven by several of the 14 Best Practices in Reading. The staff has identified the following as their core practices: 1) Explicit word analysis instruction, including phonics, 2) Assessment to inform instruction; 3) Reflection and collaboration; and 4) Alignment to learning standards. Early reading strategies such as phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle, sound spelling correspondence, decoding ability, fluency, and comprehension skills are woven daily into the learning activities of all K-1 classes. Emergent level "Keep Books" are used in a variety of ways throughout all classrooms. When completed, students bring the books home to add to their individual library collection. Students and parents are encouraged to "visit" this home library daily and continue the reading activities they had learned in class at home. A variety of assessment tools are used across the board, such as pre- and post-reading surveys at kindergarten and grade 1, recorded observations, work sampling, and portfolios. Report cards are narrative assessment drawn from the collection of formative and summative data gathered by the teacher on each child.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systematic Word Analysis Instruction, Including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Early reading strategies used at the classroom level include phonemic awareness, decoding ability, alphabetic principle, fluency, sound-spelling correspondence, and comprehension skills. Other daily strategies are word walls, writing centers, modeling "Keep" books, shared and guided reading, language experience stories, daily news oral and written.

Professional Development/Teacher Support

Staff has received professional development in the above reading strategies. Professional development for K- 1 staff includes a ten-hour workshop for K-1 teachers and the R2R Summer Institutes.

25 (of the 48) teachers have been trained in Reading Recovery, Best Practices in Reading, Multiple Intelligences, Pat Cunningham Workshops, shared and guided reading workshops, Frameworks - Language and Literacy, and Frameworks - Assessment and Evaluation, and Work Sampling.

Resources

Ten-hour workshop for 48 K- 1 teachers and Early Literacy Specialist (ELS) teachers
$160/person x 48 $7,680 Presenters for workshop =$375
Instructional supplies and materials - 48 teachers x $ 10/teacher $480
Emergent-level books for student/parent incentives $100/set (400 books) x 12 sets = $1,200
(600 students receive 8 books each)
Parent workshops on reading activities for home
Magnetic letters- $2.50 x 600 students = $1,500

Evidence of Success

Reading Recovery Observation Surveys (sub-test); Concepts of Print - show growth from 1 to 16 points (possible 24 points.); Letter Identification went from 0 to 100%; Text Level Reading from 1 to 22 in 2nd grade; Dictation -(letters/sound) - growth of 0-37 (sounds); Kindergarten teacher survey of Early Literacy Strategies - on scale of 1 to 5 (5 being highest) received 5 from all teachers. Parent response to six strategies reflected in home use and support of six strategies was positive.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - post Measures ☒Teacher observation/reporting

Description of Best Practice 2: Assessment to Inform Instruction

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English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Strategies to systematically assess the reading levels and progress of students are work sampling system, observation survey for at-risk students and kindergarten screening (alphabet/letter-sound, concepts about print). As words are accumulated on word walls, teacher and students have used the words to create sentences and stories.

Professional Development/Teacher Support

Staff has received professional development in the above assessment strategies. These activities have been an integral part of the district's professional development plan. 25 teachers are trained in Reading Recovery; and all K-1 teachers are trained in Frameworks and Work Sampling. Training was done in district for trainer of trainers for Reading Recovery.

Resources

Ten-hour workshop for 48 K- 1 and ELS teachers. $160/person x 48 $7,680
Presenters for workshop. = $375
Instructional supplies and materials - 48 teachers x $10/teacher $480
Emergent-level books for student/parent incentives - $100/set (400 books) x 12 sets $1,200
(600 students receive 8 books each)
Parent workshops on reading activities for home
Magnetic letters - $2.50 x 600 students = $1,500

Evidence of Success

Lesson plans reflect assessment strategies. Other assessments include teacher pre/post survey and parent pre/post survey, running records, teacher journals, Text levels 1 to 22 Letter ID 0 - 100%. Data results indicated increased scores in Concepts About Print (CAP). Students have shown gains in book handling skills, directional behaviors, visual scanning, specific concepts about punctuation use and hierarchical concepts of letters and words. Student alphabetic principle concepts have increased. Running records revealed students had more developed skills than teachers had estimated.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒Pre - post Measures ☒Performance Assessment
☒Teacher observation/reporting ☒Standardized Tests
☒Products evaluated against a rubric ☒Surveys/Interviews ☒ Other

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For more information, contact:

Harlem Consolidated School District 122
Lynn Gibson, Director of Grants & Entitlements
8615 North Second Street
Machesney Park, IL 61115
815/654-4500
815/654-4535 (fax)

LAHARPE DISTRICT 335

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 535 Grades: PreK-12	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-3
District/School Type: Rural	Best Practice 7: Variety of Genre
Socioeconomic Level: 32% low income	Best Practice 8: Appropriate Levels
Ethnicity: 99% white, 1% Afro-American	Scope/Setting for the Practices: Grade Level

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Children in grades K-3 write in journals, read aloud, and participate in sustained silent reading during every school day. Students are grouped heterogeneously for reading instruction. All children in a grade level participate in the same activities. Title I provides supplemental instruction in reading and writing in addition to the formal language arts instruction. During this time, instruction is usually done in small groups with both teachers parallel teaching; however whole group instruction is sometimes used with one teacher directing the lesson and the other teacher facilitating the activity. Formal reading instruction is based in using the basal textbook while adding supplemental materials to build background. Novel units at second and third grade are also used instead of the basal. The basal textbook is one of several choices teachers may select for reading instruction to meet the needs of their students and adapt to the curriculum. Student teachers and pre-student teachers from Western Illinois University (WIU) are often working in the building. Teachers welcome the new insights and innovative approaches that these students and their professors bring to their classrooms. Instruction by many of these K-3 teachers has remained current with recent approaches due to their work with WIU faculty and students. Additionally, teachers attend conferences and workshops to learn new strategies and better enable them to teach their students and meet individual needs. The small class size (average of 20) combined with supplemental instructors, volunteers and teacher aides allow the teachers the opportunity to work with small groups or individuals when needed. All of these practices along with daily planning time and monthly Title I planning sessions contribute to the yearly success that an experienced faculty is able to bring to its students.

Description of Best Practice 7: Variety of Genre

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

Implementation Strategies

A variety of strategies are used in K-3 classrooms. Some of these are described below.

Sustained Silent Reading: 15-20 minutes is allotted during every day for children to silently read self-selected material. Everyone, including the teacher, participates.

Cooperative group activities: Students are grouped heterogeneously to complete a variety of activities, e.g., participating in a reading discussion group, completing a story map, or writing a cooperative story.

Cross-curricular units: Students study topics that cross the curriculum, e.g., studying Olden Times as related to reading, language arts, social studies, math.

Multi-cultural studies: Students study a variety of cultures (e.g., Hispanic, Native American, Eskimo, Swedish, German, African and Russian) and connect this study through reading, language arts and social studies units. New units about other cultures are being developed for additional studies.

Drama presentations: Most of the drama presentations occur in the spring at grades 2 and 3. Title I staff works with the classes to help students prepare for these presentations that are performed several times for the community and other classes during the school day. Students who are performing in the play design or provide the scenery, costumes and props. All of the lines are memorized. Drama at kindergarten and first grade levels involve more impromptu re-enactments of well-known stories. Reader's theater (where students read rather than memorize a play) are also used in grades 2 and 3.

Fiction reading and non-fiction reading: Students are involved in reading both fiction and non-fiction at every grade level. Students become aware of the differences between fictional and true stories and carry this awareness through to writing both fictional and factual stories.

Using multiple genres and varied writing styles: Not only do students read and write fiction and non-fiction but they read multiple genres of stories; from biographies to poetry to fairy tales and folklore. Writing experiences include journals, letter writing, reports, persuasive, informative, creative, innovation stories that are a similar story-line to a book they have read.

Write/read poetry: Students are exposed to poetry by listening to poetry, chanting poems, memorizing poetry, reading and writing poetry. Poetry books are included in sustained silent reading choices. Students in kindergarten learn nursery rhymes and other poetry rhymes.

Students in 2nd grade study the varied rhyming patterns (e.g., two lines rhyme, every other line rhymes.) After reading many examples and identifying the rhyming words and types of pattern, students then begin writing poems. A list of words is created that rhymes with the first word they want to rhyme. (For example, if wood is their first rhyming word, then other possibilities for the second rhyming word might be should, could, good, stood, hood). Students in 3rd grade expand to other poetry styles (haiku, diamante, acrostic, cinquain, and free verse) and read and write these styles as a class, in small groups, and individually.

Read/write biographies, folk tales, research: Students in 2nd and 3rd grades connect a lot of reading and writing by writing what they have learned from reading and by writing a similar story in the same genre. Students in 3rd grade create their own fairy tale or folk tale by combining several well-known ones into a new creation. Research reading and note-taking is completed on various topics for students to use with expository IGAP writing. Students also read biographies, complete a time-line for the person and then complete a time-line of their life or someone they know well. From this time-line, students will write a mini biography of this person's life.

Response to literature journals: Students at 2nd and 3rd grade level form heterogeneous groups. They are reading a novel and each day when they meet (2 -3 days a week) they should have a designated portion of the novel completed. Each student in the group should have an assigned response ready to share. For example, one student is to have a written summary of the assigned novel pages ready to share. Another student is to select a favorite portion of the novel to read aloud to the group and explain why he/she selected this. Another student shares how what was read can be connected to a similar experience that he/she has had or knows someone who has had. A fourth student has written a prediction about what they think will

happen in the next assigned reading section and tell why or what clues they have used to make this prediction. If there is a fifth student in the group, this student may operate as the leader, asking different students to report and asking others if they have any questions or clarifications for the student. Sometimes, this fifth student is asked to draw a picture that illustrates the main idea that happened in the reading and explain it. Another strategy for response to literature journals is to ask students to write a journal response that tells the main idea or action that occurred in the section they read and a prediction about what they think will happen and what clues/ information they used to form this prediction. These are shared during class time.

Writing innovative stories: Students write stories that are similar to something they have read. For example, after students in 2nd grade read a Nate the Great story by Marjorie Weinman Shartnat, they then write a Nate the Great or Kate the Great story. This is done following teacher modeling and discussion of what elements and characters would be included in a Nate the Great story. First graders write more simplified innovations of shorter stories they have read and kindergartners write innovations as well, using pictures to complete their stories. For example, following the reading of Eric Carle's The Hungry Caterpillar, students complete a class book of what their hungry caterpillar would eat by pasting a picture of food to their page that says "On Tuesday, the hungry caterpillar ate a _____." These pages are put together to form class books and students then practice reading the page they created.

Journal writing: Writing a journal entry begins in kindergarten with students drawing a picture of something that happened in their life and then dictating a sentence to an adult helper. Students who are ready to write their own sentences are encouraged to try to spell and write their own words. Students in grades 1 through 3 write in their journals every morning on any topic of their choice. Teachers read and respond back to students.

Letter writing, thank you writing, pen pal writing: Students in 2nd and 3rd grade write letters to pen pals, write letters to relatives, the principal, and to companies for information. Students in all grades write thank you notes to people who do presentations to their classes. All of this writing is an authentic, real-life activity that gives students a purpose for writing.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

A cooperative with Western Illinois University student teacher preparatory program provides additional support to the classroom teacher in order to give students more individualized or small group instruction in reading and writing experiences. Additionally, the new ideas and strategies that the student teachers bring provide the classroom teachers with on-site opportunities to implement and practice these new approaches to providing students with broad reading and writing experiences.

Teachers find it very beneficial to visit other schools and to have schools visit them. It provides them an opportunity to observe and share ideas with other professionals concerning implementing reading and writing activities in the classroom. It also provides opportunities to share one's philosophy of teaching and to question and justify those beliefs.

Teachers also benefit from attending conferences, such as the Illinois Reading Conference, the Title I Conference and the Gifted Conference, workshops and inservice programs to obtain ideas about teaching strategies and materials that can be used in the teaching of reading and writing. For example, the literature response journals was one activity that teachers brought back from a conference and decided to implement with the aid of the Title I staff. Another example was the Power Writing workshop that the first grade staff attended and have implemented in their classroom.

Resources

Title I staff meet monthly with teachers to plan lessons, strategies and materials to use for in-class Title I instructional time. This planning also includes how to provide students broad reading and writing experiences during the time Title I staff is available to work with those classes.

Teachers at LaHarpe have daily planning time during which they can meet with other grade-level teachers to plan for reading and writing instruction. This daily planning may involve rescheduling or redesigning a lesson planned for that week or it may involve planning for the next reading/writing unit that will be implemented in the near future.

The district provides substitutes in order for teachers to be able to attend conferences at which they will learn new approaches for teaching reading and writing.

Every classroom at the K-2 level has at least a half-time teaching assistant available to work with students on improving their reading and writing. At times, these assistants work with individuals. Other times, they work with small groups of students in providing them with broad reading experiences. Having 3 adults in the classroom each working with a small group of 6-7 students gives students more opportunities to read and discuss a particular story than if it were taught as a whole group activity.

Student teachers and pre-student teachers are viewed as a valuable resource in bringing new ideas and materials to the classroom. This is especially true with their new ideas for writing approaches and new novel units that they have developed to implement with classes. The student teachers also provide the teacher time to observe the class as the student teacher works with the students or to assist the teacher in giving individual assistance to students, keeping them on task, while the teacher is able to continue the reading or writing lesson.

Title I teachers and the teacher assistant share additional ideas about reading and writing approaches and materials. They also work in class with the teacher to provide modeling of teaching reading and writing, to work with individuals and small groups so as to provide more students the opportunity to read and discuss ideas, and to work with the classroom teacher to assist students during writing instruction.

Competitive Grant funds, Title I funds, Reading Improvement and local funds are used to support reading and writing activities by providing instructional materials, software, classroom libraries, staff and staff development activities that relate to providing a broad reading and writing program that emphasizes multiple genres and writing styles.

Evidence of Success

Teachers have developed rubrics to determine student success over time. Writing portfolios are assessed, using these rubric scoring guides, to determine if students are meeting goals in reading and writing. Class-created (written) books or books created by small groups assess students' knowledge on a particular subject and their ability to impart this knowledge through the written medium. End of unit Reading tests and checklists on Reading comprehension activities, such as Story Maps, are also used for local assessments. 85-91% of the students met the Reading goal for the local assessment and 97% of the students met the Writing goal. Instead of Reading tests, Marie Clay's Diagnostic Survey is used to assess kindergartners' Concepts of Print. 93% of these students met acceptable progress for the district's goals in Reading and 91% met the goals for writing. These assessments, along with the Stanford Achievement Test and the IGAP reading and writing tests show that a high percentage of our students, including

Title I identified students, meet district goals and have high performance. 15% of all the students tested received special education services for Reading. On IGAP Reading, 87% of our students met or exceeded state goals while 95% of our students met or exceeded state goals on the Writing assessment. On the Reading section of the Stanford Assessment, 56-66% of our students in grades K-3 scored 70% or higher while over *50%* of our students scored 80% or higher.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Performance Assessment ☒ Standardized Tests

Technology/Equipment Requirements

Students have access to computers in the classroom and also in the district computer lab. This technology is mainly used to type student letters and publications and add clip art. It is also used to research topics via encyclopedias on CD-ROM and the Internet. Students use some software programs, such as the Living Books reading software for individual practice, but usually in the classroom rather than during whole group lab time.

Description of Best Practice 8: Appropriate Instructional Levels

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English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

Implementation Strategies

A variety of strategies are used in K-3 classrooms. Some of these are described below:

One on one oral reading: A teacher, teacher's aide or volunteer works with one student at a time to listen to them read orally from their instructional text. If needed, the adult will choral read (read aloud with the student) to help them improve fluency and decoding (reading at the right speed and saying the words correctly).

Repeated reading: Students who have difficulty reading the instructional text fluently, will be asked to read the same text repeatedly (2-3 times during the week) until there is improvement in reading the text fluently and correctly. All students read the same text repeatedly during the week to aid them in better comprehension of the instructional text.

Choral reading: Students at kindergarten and first grade use choral reading often during reading instruction. Other grade levels may use it to emphasize a particular passage of text or for certain types of genres, such as poetry. Choral reading involves having a group of students all read the same material together at the same time, as a chorus. This especially helps the students to decode and read fluently.

Read own writing: Students begin at kindergarten and continue throughout all elementary grades to write. This may be journal writing, writing done by a group or the class as a whole, or other types of writing. Research indicates that students are more familiar with vocabulary they

use in their writing and they usually know more about the subjects on which they write. Because of this, when asked to read aloud what they have written, students will read it easier and with more fluency. This helps them develop an awareness of how reading aloud should sound. It also makes them aware that what is written, and then read, should make sense. Students self-correct their writing as they read their work aloud.

Teacher models: As the teacher models appropriate oral reading of instructional level materials, students are able to follow along or even read along with the teacher. This gives students additional opportunities to read correctly at their instructional level.

Whole class instruction: Students mainly receive instruction as a whole class. The class is heterogeneously grouped and all students in a class are instructed at their instructional level for that grade. Students are not grouped. Many of the strategies explained here are used for whole class instruction. Students who find the material difficult are able to follow along and comprehend because of hearing the story read repeatedly, reading it chorally with the class and also receiving some one-on-one practice, if needed.

Heterogeneous groups: Students who are at the same instructional level are rarely grouped to work together. Rather, students from a variety of levels work together to read at the instructional level for that particular grade. Students are able to be models and peer teachers in helping other students who have difficulty with the material to practice their reading. All of the students feel successful by using this method because they are able to read the same material, rather than being put in a lower grade level text, and they enjoy working together. At the younger grades, it does not appear that students resent helping others or resent being helped by their peers.

Pre-teach vocabulary: If students are going to be able to decode new material and comprehend or understand what it means, then difficult vocabulary needs to be taught prior to asking students to read the material. This vocabulary is taught as a whole class activity but then students also take this home to practice and work with a volunteer in small groups or one-on-one to demonstrate their mastery. When they do read the instructional level material after having learned the vocabulary, students are able to read more fluently and better understand the story so they can participate in the discussion about the reading material.

Read to predict/confirm: Students need to learn that it is important to interact with what they read. There is more to reading than just saying the words correctly. Students need to comprehend what they read and actively predict what they think will happen. During reading instruction, students are taught, through teacher modeling and class discussion, to predict what will happen in the story by using background experiences and clues from the story. Students are encouraged to read to confirm that their prediction was correct or to readjust their prediction to what did happen. Students are then asked to predict further what they think will happen, read to confirm and continue the process to the end of the story.

Students question teacher: Often, during reading instruction, the teacher asks students to answer questions about the story. We find that students enjoy reversing this role and asking the teacher, or perhaps other students, questions about the story. The teacher sometimes instructs the students by modeling higher level questions that require students to analyze, predict or give their opinion about the story. This is often done after students have asked all the questions they have prepared and then the teacher will ask his/hers. Students will eventually pick up on this type of questioning and begin incorporating these types of questions into their prepared list of questions for the teacher.

Guided reading: This activity is often completed as a whole class. The teacher guides the students through the instructional material by referring them to a specific page and asking them to read silently (a previously read text) to find an answer to a particular question. Students are called on to answer and perhaps asked to read from the instructional material the sentence or two that answers that particular question. The lesson continues through to the end of the story. At times, a certain student, or group of students, will be asked to read to find a particular answer to one question while another group is reading to answer a different question. This way, the teacher is able to involve not only the students who read quickly and usually have the correct answers but to include the more reticent students by asking them to find an answer to a particular question that no one else has been asked.

Whole language phonics: Whole language instruction has become known as a strategy that involves students in reading materials at their instructional level but is a method that does not teach reading skills during instruction. While reading novels or small books for the purpose of understanding what is read is definitely an emphasis of whole language, reading instruction that helps improve reading and decoding skills is definitely part of whole language methodology. The difference is that this instruction occurs naturally within the instructional text and always after the students and teacher have read the entire story once for enjoyment and comprehension. Then, during a repeated reading, the teacher could include a phonic or reading skill lesson. For example, if a student is reading a story about a boy going out to play in the winter and before leaving the house his mother tells him to put on his____, the teacher can use this part of the story to direct students' attention at reading to make sense (what would a boy put on to go outside in the winter), at using initial and final letters to help with decoding (since the word begins with c and ends with t, jacket would make sense but would not fit with the letters we have as clues to the word) or to discuss the "oa" phonetic sound that occurs in the word "coat" and to stop and do a mini-lesson on other words with a similar sound.

Comprehension maps (KWL charts and Venn Diagrams): Students often use comprehension story maps that ask them to write down when the story took place, where it took place, and what characters were in the story. They are then asked to record what happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story, or, for a more complicated plot, what the problem was and how it was solved. The KWL strategy works well with non-fictional material that students might read at their instructional reading level. With a KWL chart, students in a group, or as a whole class, will write on a chart what they know about a particular subject, in another column, what they want to know about that subject and then after reading the material, the students will complete the KWL chart by recording what they have learned. This helps students who do not have a lot of background experience about a particular subject to learn from other students during the discussion, and therefore improve their understanding of a story that might have otherwise been difficult. It also encourages students to think about what they might learn while reading this story or to think about what they might want to learn by reading other material. Finally, they confirm whether the information they listed as what they knew is correct, identified what material that they wanted to learn about was included in the text, and listed other facts that they learned while reading the text. Venn Diagrams are also used frequently by all of the teachers at LaHarpe. These diagrams can be large, and completed as a whole class activity, or small for students to complete independently at their desks. They work well when students are reading material, or multiple works of material, that they can then record similarities and differences between the two points of view or the two books. This strategy is also used to compare a book, such as Molly's Pilgrim by Barbara Cohen with the video that was set in a different time than in the book. All of these charts or strategies help students direct their attention at higher level thinking skills and attending to understanding and remembering what they read.

Author studies: At times, students will read several books by the same author to study whether the author uses the same style of writing, the same characters, similar illustrations or illustrators for the books. Students become very adept at recognizing certain authors' works and realizing that there are many different styles of writing. It also helps students comprehend stories easier if they can expect that certain characters or similar story plots will be found in other books by the same author.

Supplementary novels: In addition to the basal that is used to instruct reading, students also read novel units as a class that supplement the basal themes. For example, students at the 3rd grade level study "Olden Times." Not only do they read stories from the basal and their social studies text, but they also read novels about olden times for reading instruction that gives them opportunities to relate what they have learned about olden times to a longer novel story. Often these novels are read in small groups with volunteers, student teachers or Title I staff overseeing the groups and directing the reading and discussion.

Fiction and non-fiction: Reading instruction uses both fiction and non-fiction materials. Students need to learn that one reads a fiction story differently from the way one would read non-fiction material. For many students, this needs to be taught to them during instructional time, it is not something that they inherently know. Before reading, teachers discuss with students what type of story they will be reading and whether they will read for learning information or for understanding a story. Students learn that one reads at different speeds, depending on the purpose for reading. Students also learn, through instruction, that there are different types of fictional material, such as poetry, folklore, mysteries, etc., and there are different types of non-fictional material, such as biographies, informational books, encyclopedias, etc. Recognizing the different types of genres, or writing styles, helps students better comprehend what they read by knowing what to expect when they encounter material and how they will need to read it to best understand it.

SSR: SSR, also known as sustained silent reading, is not usually done during reading instruction time. Students and the teacher spend 15 - 20 minutes during one portion of the day silently reading self-selected books that are of interest to them. While students may, at times, select books that are above or below their instructional reading level, research shows that the more time students have available to practice reading, the more gains they will make in reading at their instructional level. Studies also found that, given time, students will eventually select books that are appropriate for their reading ability. All of the teachers at LaHarpe feel that SSR and Journal Writing are priorities in every students' daily reading time.

Big Books: Teachers use big books, especially at the kindergarten level, to provide the experience of what young children receive when they sit on a lap and are read to. It is not the same, but the books are of a size that every student in the room is able to see the print and the illustrations. Big books are also used during whole class or small group instruction so that students can read aloud together. Because all can see the text and illustrations, predictions are able to be made and mini-lessons can be taught by drawing students' attention to phonetic elements or text structure, such as quotation marks tell you someone is talking. At the upper grades, big books are used to initiate a topic or theme study by providing all students the opportunity to see the text as well as hear it read. For students who are visual rather than auditory learners, it is very helpful for them to be able to see as well as hear the material.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

A cooperative with Western Illinois University's student teacher preparatory program provides additional support to the classroom teacher to give students more individualized or small group opportunities to read at their instructional level.

Teachers find it very beneficial to visit other schools and to have schools visit them. It provides them an opportunity to observe and share ideas with other professionals concerning implementing reading and writing activities in the classroom. It also provides opportunities to share one's philosophy of teaching and to question and justify those beliefs. Teachers are able to learn new ideas for the teaching of reading and for classroom management techniques that are of benefit towards providing daily time for all students to read at their instructional level.

Teachers also benefit from attending conferences, such as the Illinois Reading Conference, the Title I Conference, Science Conference, and the Gifted Conference. Workshops and in-service programs provide opportunities to obtain ideas about teaching strategies and materials for the teaching of reading and scheduling time for all students to be able to read daily at their instructional level.

Resources

Title I staff meet monthly with teachers to plan lessons, strategies and materials to use for in-class Title I reading instructional time. For example, teachers will not only plan what students will read but also which students need to work individually or in small groups to have more practice time reading at their instructional level.

Teachers at LaHarpe have daily planning time during which they can meet with other grade-level teachers to plan for reading instruction to ensure that all students have daily time for this. This daily planning may involve rescheduling or redesigning a lesson planned for that week or it may involve planning for the next reading unit that will be implemented in the near future.

The district provides substitutes so teachers can attend conferences where they will be able to learn new approaches for teaching reading and various scheduling ideas and classroom management techniques that enable more students to have time for daily reading at their instructional level.

Every classroom at the K-2 level has at least a half-time teaching assistant available to work with students on improving their reading. At times, these assistants work with individuals. Other times, they work with small groups of students in providing them broad reading experiences at their instructional level. Having 3 adults in the classroom each working with a small group of 6-7 students gives the students more opportunities to read and discuss a particular story than if it were taught as a whole group activity.

Student teachers and pre-student teachers are viewed as a valuable resource in bringing new ideas and materials to the classroom, especially when they implement their new ideas for novel units that they have developed. The student teachers also assist the teacher in giving individual assistance to students or small groups so that they have more time to read at their instructional level.

Title I teachers and the teacher assistant share additional ideas about reading and writing approaches and materials. They also work in-class with the teacher to provide modeling of appropriate reading for the students' instructional level and to work with individuals and small groups so as to provide more students the opportunity to read and discuss ideas.

Competitive Grant funds, Title I funds, Staff Development, Reading Improvement and local funds are used to support reading activities by providing instructional materials, software, classroom libraries, staff, and staff development activities that relate to providing sufficient time for students to read daily at their instructional level.

Evidence of Success

Teachers have developed rubrics to determine student success over time. End of unit Reading tests and checklists on Reading comprehension activities, such as Story Maps, are also used for local assessments. 85-91% of the students met the Reading goal for the local assessment. Instead of Reading tests, Marie Clay's Diagnostic Survey is used to assess kindergartners' Concepts of Print. 93% of these students met acceptable progress for the district's goals in Reading. These assessments, along with the Stanford Achievement Test and the IGAP reading test show that a high percentage of our students, including Title I identified students, meet district goals and have a high performance. 15% of all the students tested received special education services for reading. On IGAP Reading, 87% of our students met or exceeded state goals. On the Reading section of the Stanford Assessment, 56-66% of our students in grades K-3 scored 70% or higher while over 50% of our students scored 80% or higher.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success ☒ Standardized Tests

Technology/Equipment Requirements

Students have access to computers in the classroom and also in the district computer lab. Students use some software programs, such as the Living Books reading software, for individual practice at their instructional level but usually in the classroom rather than during whole group lab time.

For more information, contact:

Steven Breckon, Superintendent
LaHarpe Community Unit School District 335
404 W. Main Street
LaHarpe, IL 61450
217/659-7739
217/659-7730 (fax)

LOCKPORT TOWNSHIP DISTRICT 205

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 2,652 Grades: 9-12 District/School Type: Suburban Socioeconomic Level: 5.2% low income Ethnicity: 88.8% white, 4.9% Afro-American, 3.8% Native American, 2.13% Asian/ Pacific Islander	Implemented at Grade Levels: 9 Best Practice 3: Planning Best Practice 4: Collaboration / Reflection Scope/Setting for the Practices: Grade Level

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Teachers routinely reflect on their instructional practices and collaborate with other educators on instructional practices and students progress within the school and/or district. Collaboration takes place in the form of daily team planning, team teaching, staff development, new teacher induction program, and a monthly professional meeting among staff members.

Teachers plan instruction considering the three phases of reading instructions before, during, and after reading. Lesson design and evaluation instruments focus on the improvement of instruction through a variety of strategies including SSR, KWL, graphic organizers, vocabulary instruction, predictions, summaries, evaluations, analyses, journal writing, etc.

Description of Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning to Create Independence through Student-Owned Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Lesson design focuses on appealing to all students' learning styles and includes strategies for pre-reading, during reading, and after reading. Pre-reading strategies include KWL, predictions, anticipation guides, vocabulary instruction, and discussion to activate prior knowledge. During reading strategies include directed reading, reading guides, writing in journals, dialogue journals, paired reading, literature circles, and two-column notes. After reading strategies include response journals, learning logs, critical analyses, mapping/graphic organizers, semantic feature analysis, discussion webs, and the use of the reading/writing connection.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Carol Santa, president of the International Reading Association, presented training in CRISS (Creating Independence through Student Ed Strategies) strategies in the summer of 1994. Training focused on the use of reading strategies and has continued in TASIC (Teachers and Students in Collaboration) meetings. Teachers have attended state and national conferences and have shared strategies with their colleagues. Full faculty and administrators' inservices were provided on the use of pre-reading, during reading, and post reading strategies. The new teacher induction program provides mentors to guide new faculty members in the use of these strategies. The reading specialist is available for consultation with faculty on lesson design.

Resources

Funding for staff development, i.e., Carol Santa CRISS workshop, summer workshop on learning styles, administrators' workshop, ongoing TASIC meetings, ongoing new teacher induction mentor programs. Other expenses included stipends for attendance at summer, Saturday, and after school workshops, registration at professional conferences, e.g., IGAP workshop, NCIE National Conference, International Reading Association state and national conferences.

Evidence of Success

Students have experimented with the use of a variety of strategies, analyzed their own learning styles through metacognitive processes, and begun to internalize these strategies and apply them to other reading experiences. Improvement has been noted in ACI, IGAP, and CAT scores. Discussion among teachers regarding instructional practices occurs more frequently. Team teaching at the Freshman Center has helped to ensure a higher level of success for students.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

- ☒ Process Evaluation
- ☒ Products evaluated against a rubric
- ☒ Teacher observation/reporting
- ☒ Surveys/Interviews
- ☒ Other: Peer evaluation and administrative evaluation

Description of Best Practice 4: Collaboration and Reflection

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons*

- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

Teachers in all content areas have the opportunity to meet on a monthly basis in Teachers and Students in Collaboration (TASIC) meetings. The focus of these meetings is on the improvement of student performance through the use of appropriate reading and writing strategies. Guest speakers, as well as in-house experts, are provided. Freshman Center teachers meet daily in interdisciplinary teaching team to discuss student progress and instructional practices to best serve the needs of their students. Team teaching provides for collaboration with colleagues and leads to integration of curricular areas. All department meetings provide time for discussion of best practices within the particular content area. The new teacher induction program provides mentors. Teachers and mentors meet on a biweekly basis throughout the first semester.

Professional Development/Teacher Support

TASIC co-coordinators attend workshops on improvement of instructional practices and disseminate this information to all colleagues. As other staff members attend pertinent workshops/conferences in their content area, they share new instructional practices with staff through TASIC, team meetings, department meetings, etc. Two faculty members are current cadre members of the Professional Development Alliance workshops focused on aligning curriculum with Illinois Learning Standards.

Resources

New teacher induction program coordinator and TASIC co-coordinators are paid on a scale similar to that of a co-curricular coaching position. Teachers in attendance at TASIC are compensated for the one and one-half hour monthly meetings. Funds are provided for guest speakers at TASIC meetings, i.e., authors and out-of-district master teachers. Teaching schedule at the Freshman Center has been adjusted to permit daily forty-five minute team plan and conference periods.

Evidence of Success

As described under this heading in Best Practice 3, ACT, IGAP, and CAT scores have increased. More discussion occurs among teachers regarding instructional practices. Team teaching at the Freshman Center has helped to ensure a higher level of success for students.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Performance Assessment
☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Standardized Tests ☒ Surveys/Interviews
☒ Products evaluated against a rubric ☒ Other: Portfolios

For more information, contact:

Lockport Township High School District 205
Richard Dittle, Curriculum Director
1323 East 7th Street
Lockport, IL 60441
815/588-8100

MONMOUTH DISTRICT 38 / Project FIRST

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment:	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-2
District/School Type: Rural	Best Practice 2: Assessment
Socio-Economic Level: 44% low income	Best Practice 3: Planning
Ethnicity: 98% white, 2% Afro-American	Scope/Setting for the Practices: District Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Project FIRST was born four years ago, based upon poor IGAP scores at third grade. It has grown into a research-based, developmentally appropriate comprehensive, integrated language arts program. The district is committed to developing independent strategic readers and that is exactly what is happening! First grade students are reading print everywhere; even the music teacher asks the students to "read the second stanza" as he sings it with them. A comprehensive staff development strand has been developed that builds upon district employed teacher trainers. The district has a model program that is continually developed and nurtured. All activities have been accomplished in a district that is 77% state aid. *If we can do it - anybody can!*

Year 1: Staff met monthly (or more often) to develop a common set of beliefs about the teaching of language arts. Teachers completed three 15-hour in-district courses on running records, leveling books, and teaching reading strategies. A decision was made to implement many of the strategies significant to reading recovery. To improve their knowledge of phonics, teachers participated in out-of-district workshops on topics such as word walls, reading strategies, and the Illinois Reading Conference. Books were leveled. Reading aides were trained. Every child had a weekly running record. Word walls were created.

Year 2: Teachers continued to meet monthly and during the summer to plan and share ideas, issues, and concerns. Teachers were given permission to integrate science and social studies into the language arts program. First grade classes were to spend ½ day in language arts and ½ day in math/science. Trained reading aides listened to students read every day, took running records and managed the book check out program. Every student takes a book home every night at their independent reading level. Research has supported that students develop the self-perceptions of themselves as readers when they can in fact read fluently. Students also worked in small groups or individually on skill deficits identified through their running records. Whole classroom instruction occurs on an agreed list of objectives that are aligned to the Illinois State Learning Standards. Students write, write, and write some more. Teachers continued their professional development by participating in three additional in-district 15-hour workshops on phonics, word walls, and reading strategies, as well as out of district training and meetings.

Description of Best Practice 2: Assessment to Inform Instruction

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency

Implementation Strategies

Every first grade student within District #38 receives a running record at least once a week. The classroom teacher, a trained reading aide, Title I reading teacher or a Reading Recovery

teacher takes this record. Staff identifies the specific strategy or strategies (e.g., chunking, re-reading, self-correction) that each child needs to work on and places him or her into a flexible skills group. Students are assigned an instructional reading level and an independent reading level. Students take home a book at their independent reading level every night. The comprehensive assessment book used by District #38 was created prior to any commercial test being available. It requires a multitude of writing and reading assessments to be completed during the school year. The first grade school report card has been altered to more accurately reflect what is taught.

Currently the program has expended into the second grade. Two factors led to that decision: parent requests and the need to re-examine what was taught at the second grade level. Prior to the implementation of Project FIRST, second grade teachers continued to teach fluency, moving later into greater comprehension strategies. With the success of this program, the first graders are entering second grade reading at second grade level with excellent fluency and as strong strategic readers. The district goals remain: FLUENT readers by the end of first grade, and strong COMPREHENSION skills by the end of second grade.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Monmouth District 38 has a comprehensive Professional Development Track for Language Arts. In-district trainers teach six 15-hour courses. Topics include Word Wall, Phonics, Running Records, How to Level Books, Assessment, Strategic Readers. This is the third year of intensive staff development opportunities for Project FIRST (Focused Instruction in Reading Strategies and Techniques). All first grade teachers have attended the three levels of Wright Group training on reading, visited other schools, spent an in-service day on literature circles, attended writing and spelling workshops and the Illinois Reading Association state conference. First and second grade teachers have visited each other's rooms to view teaching styles, material involvement, philosophy of teaching, etc. This program has been a focus of School Improvement Plans at all four buildings and the District Professional Development Plan.

Resources

Classroom teachers, Title I and Reading Recovery teachers, plus strong administrative support and involvement have been key to this program's success. Professional books and materials have been supplied when needed (i.e., Patricia Cunningham's phonics book, Gay Su Pinnell's book). During the Research and Development year (1996) monthly meetings were held to develop a common belief system about the teaching of language arts. District workshops, budgetary support, and a district commitment meet the program needs of the teacher-developed and research-based program. Teachers spent an entire year reading journals, articles, and books on phonics, assessment, etc. Teachers were given release time to meet and plan, to level books, to go and visit other classrooms for ideas, strategies, and alignment purposes.

Evidence of Success

A doctoral student from Illinois State University is studying Project FIRST as part of a dissertation. Qualitative and quantitative results are being conducted to evaluate overall effectiveness of the program. The project is being compared with a control district which is basal driven and where the teaching staff has received minimal staff development in the teaching of reading. Students were pre-tested with the MAT 7 Reading Comprehension tests, given reading inventories, asked to draw pictures. A post-test comparison occurred in May.

Early indicators of program success have been both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative results have been interviews with second grade teachers. For quantitative data: Over 85% of last year's first graders exited reading at Level 18 or higher. In one school, only three students did not exit ready for second grade, and they have since been placed into self-contained special education classes.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Performance Assessment
☒ Standardized Tests ☒Surveys/Interviews

Description of Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning to Create Independence through Student-Owned Strategies

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English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

None since this best practice is a process.

Implementation Strategies

Teachers, facilitated by the Director of Curriculum, plan the agenda for the monthly grade level meetings. Many of the meetings are process oriented. Having developed a common belief about the teaching of language arts, staff has studied together, shared center ideas, developed assessment criteria and writing prompts, and shared leveled books, challenged the worth of the program, laughed and even cried together. Teachers have been given release time to meet, level books, visit other classrooms, visit other schools, meet with in-district trainers, attend workshops, and think out loud. The program has received high administrative priority.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Topics for the in-district workshops (15 hours in length) included How to take running records?; Reading Strategies I and II; phonics, word walls – what are they? How do I use one?; How to level books.

Teachers participated in out-of-district workshops, e.g., Illinois Reading Conference, Western Illinois Reading Conference, Wright Group Trainings (three different options), other workshops on spelling, reading, writing.

Release time was provided for monthly meetings. Staff were paid for after-school meetings to plan and share new information and ideas.

Resources

Staff resources include classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers (in-district trainers), Title I teachers (in-district trainers), supportive administrators. Financial resources are needed for the paid monthly meetings ($10 per hour stipends) and stipends ($100) for completion of summer work on assessment criteria. Two days of release time were given for daylong discussions. Individual teachers were given release time to develop their own classroom environment.

Evidence of Success

100% of the students surveyed on the qualitative reading survey viewed themselves as readers. Parents are voicing strong support for the program. Student reading scores have increased.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Standardized Tests ☒ Surveys/Interviews

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For more information, contact:

Donna McCaw, Director of Curriculum (Contact)
Garfield Elementary School
321 Euclid Avenue
Monmouth, IL 61462
309/734-5664
309/734-3123 (fax)

Donald L. Daily, Superintendent
Monmouth District 38
325 South 11th Street
Monmouth, IL 61462
309/734-4712

MUNDELEIN DISTRICT 120 / Mundelein High School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 1,500 Grades: 9-12	Implemented at Grade Levels: 9-12
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 4: Collaboration / Reflection
Socioeconomic Level: 10.4% low income	Best Practice 5: Learning Standards
Ethnicity: 73.7% white, 2.6% Afro-American 19.8% Hispanic, 3.1% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: School wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Mundelein High School's current reading best practices shape the overall objectives that are embodied in student-centered learning. Through current research, teacher collaboration, grade level committees, and district-wide inservices, we have created an environment for reading improvement that reinforces existing school practices and core values. Committed to assessment and instruction that is multi-dimensional, using writing as well as projects, products, and performances to determine understanding, the classes are anchored with reading goals which reflect state standards, as well as unit and individual goals. As students progress through their courses, they are asked to create plans of action for attaining their goals, assess their progress, and provide exemplar examples of progress.

A commitment to reading best practices is evidenced in a number of ways and includes bringing in speakers, workshop leaders, and NCA committee chairs such as Steve Zemelman and Linda Crafton to assist in reflection and decision making. Evidence of past successes can be found in the four-year performance portfolios. Opportunities for collaboration, such as weekly teacher inservice time, have allowed teachers to agree on building-wide rubrics, guidelines, and building standards that are closely tied to state standards. In addition, success with reading, writing, speaking portfolios has motivated two teachers to publish *The Portfolio as a Learning Strategy*. McREL, recognizing Mundelein teachers for their commitment to best practices, has featured these innovations in two recent videos.

Description of Best Practice 4: Collaboration and Reflection

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Teachers conduct their own classroom-based research as part of their self-evaluation (reflection) to improve instruction and student learning. Teachers meet monthly in grade level committees and across the curriculum committees to improve reading instruction. Teachers collaborate on best practices through an "Advancement Center" which provides individual reading/writing tutoring to students.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

District-wide inservice has provided a system for reporting student progress on course goals that reflect the Illinois Learning Standards. Reading specialists on staff have served as mentors and provided inservice on best practices to the teaching staff. Dr. Linda Crafton (Northwestern University) has provided inservice workshops during the summer to teach writing curriculum.

Resources

The district has provided between $25,000 and $50,000 every summer to teams of curriculum writers. District policy requires that curriculum be written collaboratively and reference the Illinois Learning Standards. Resource funds for consultants are provided for in the curriculum writing budgets. Mentor teachers work with new teachers in a two-year "initiation" program. New teachers meet over a period of two years with building leaders, teacher mentors, and department chairs to better understand Mundelein standards for teaching excellence. Goals 2000 grant monies were used to pay teachers for some design/implementation activities such as designing school-wide rubrics for reading/writing/speaking tasks, and for designing assessments for core curricula that measure course goals.

Evidence of Success

All students keep a written and a video portfolio over a period of four years. Collaboration has allowed teachers to agree on guidelines and standards for this portfolio and to design rubrics used across the curriculum for reading, writing and speaking assessments. Two teachers wrote *The Portfolio as a Learning Strategy* by collaborating on their work on reading/writing at Mundelein High School.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Other: Developmental Spelling Test

Description of Best Practice 5: Learning Standards

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*

- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Students learn to use a rubric that measures their reading fluency and accuracy. On a rubric, Criteria for Demonstrating Reading Proficiency, students assess their abilities and developmental stages on personal connections, predictions, author critique, personal opinion, summarizing, and questions. Lessons are designed to improve fluency/accuracy.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Teachers designed and piloted rubrics to measure fluency and accuracy and received inservice at department meetings and during regular inservice time. Professional development was provided through graduate level courses. Other work was done on the teachers' own time. Teachers are knowledgeable about the Illinois Learning Standards, best practice (e.g., reference from the book on best practices by Steve Zemelman, Harvey Daniels and Arthur Hyde), and brain research and multiple intelligences.

Resources

Teachers were able to design the reading rubric as part of their graduate study (reimbursed by the local board of education) and using staff development time. District budgets covered substitutes and all travel/registration expenses for teachers attending conferences.

Evidence of Success

Teachers make observations and record student progress as documented by the rubric.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Performance Assessment ☒ Teacher observation/reporting

For more information, contact:

Dr. Sally Pilcher, Communication in Arts Director (Contact)
Dr. Bernadette Meisenheimer, Director of Student and Staff Services
Dr. Arthur T. Newbrough, Superintendent
Mundelein High School District 120
1350 W. Hawley Street
Mundelein, Illinois 60060
847/949-2200, Ext. 213
847/949-0599 (fax)

NAPERVILLE DISTRICT 203 / River Woods School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 650 Grade levels: K-5	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-5
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 2: Assessment
Socioeconomic Level: .01% low income	Best Practice 6: Independent Reading
Ethnicity: 82% white, 1% Afro-American, 4% Hispanic, 13% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

The staff of River Woods School is well trained and strongly committed, and district and building level administrators support an outstanding literacy program that adheres to many of the current reading best practices identified by the Illinois Right to Read Initiative. Teachers have developed a solid base of knowledge through the strong staff development program and serve as consultants and mentors for other educators.

Beginning at the kindergarten level and continuing throughout the primary grades, students receive explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and word analysis skills and strategies. In addition to guided reading instruction, students have daily opportunities for sustained reading at their independent levels. Integrated curriculum and problem-based learning link reading and writing instruction with all curricular areas. Retellings are used throughout all grade levels as a vehicle to demonstrate the comprehension process. Themed at-home reading projects encourage independent level reading outside of the classroom as well as promote family involvement. The all-school One-Minute Rate and Accuracy Assessment, ongoing running records, and various comprehension assessments inform teachers in choosing materials to match a range of reading abilities for all students. Since the summer of 1995, the Literacy Closet, an organizational system easily used and understood by teachers, ancillary and support staff, contains multiple copies of leveled books from which teachers select the appropriate materials to match their students' instructional and independent reading levels. Both this Literacy Closet and the One Minute Rate and Accuracy Assessment have been replicated and serve as models for other schools in and outside the district.

Description of Best Practice 2: Assessment to Inform Instruction

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

Implementation Strategies

Running Records are used to assess reading strategies, self-monitoring and appropriateness of book level (K-5.) The Schlagel Diagnostic Spelling/Darrell Morris Developmental Spelling Tests - assess phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge (K-5.) An all school One-Minute Oral Rate and Accuracy Assessment is used to assess accuracy and reading rate of a grade level passage (grades 1-5.) Retellings are used to assess comprehension and reader interaction with text (K-5.) The ITBS is used at grade 5, IGAP at grade 3 and basal criterion referenced test used for program evaluation as well as individual student performance.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

River Woods teachers have benefited from a very strong staff development program. Sessions include training in the administration and analysis of running records; evaluation of literacy with "teachers as readers" study groups using professional resources including the book, *Evaluating Literacy*, by Preece, et al.; presentations by Alison Preece, Andrea Butler, Richard Gentry, Darrell Morris, Judy Mitchell, Brian Camboume; teacher action research funded by a 1994 ISBE grant entitled: "Authentic Assessment and Understandable Reporting."

Resources

Time: All school Oral Reading Accuracy and Rate Assessment is given three times yearly and requires one minute per student for each administration. Running Records are taken on a consistent basis with varying time requirements. Retellings are used several times each year. Students' one-minute rate and accuracy scores are entered and stored in a database.

Money: District and building funds are used to offset costs related to staff development and purchase testing materials and supplies.

People: The reading specialist and instructional coordinator help organize building assessments. Seven support staff members assist in gathering reading rate and accuracy data. All classroom teachers are actively involved in planning and implementing ongoing assessments.

Because of teacher action research and staff development, teachers have demonstrated ownership in the development, implementation, and reporting of assessment. Data gathered from assessments are used for directing instruction. Ownership is a powerful incentive for continuing best practice.

Students participate in self-assessment, providing an incentive to take responsibility in setting goals for their own literacy learning.

River Woods School's efforts to inform parents regarding the connection between literacy assessment and instruction has provided an important incentive for parents to understand the role of assessment as it reflects the reading achievement of their child.

Evidence of Success

Administrator observations and evaluation conferences reveal teachers consciously use assessment data to drive literacy instruction, i.e. formation of guided reading groups and lesson focus and identification of students needing reinforcement activities and/or challenges.

Team planning notes and cross-grade level articulation minutes indicate assessment plays an important role in planning instruction.

The amount of time the reading specialist and classroom teachers spend discussing the implications of assessment for instruction indicates this is a significant component of the reading specialist's role.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Standardized Tests ☒ Surveys/Interviews ☒ Other: Running records

Description of Best Practice 6: Independent Reading

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

Implementation Strategies

Read and Relax time is a component of the balanced literacy program every day. The teacher is using this time to listen to children read, monitor student choices, and redirect if text is not "relaxing' enough. Teachers can check out a wide range of books from the Literacy Closet for students. Teachers model the "five-finger approach" so students learn the strategy of how to self-select "just right" books. Parents receive the same information to assist book choices at home. At-home reading projects involve the entire school and provide the structure for parents to support independent level reading at home. The fluency lab is an option for students who need extra support to increase fluency. The program design offers a supervised daily time for repeated readings and timings of leveled stories.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

River Woods School's professional resource library contains current periodicals and text on the best practice of daily independent level reading. District-sponsored coursework including ELIC and/or the Richard Owens Literacy Learning in the Classroom has been attended by 90% of staff. Teacher Action Research Projects have focused on the correlation between student reading gains and daily "Read and Relax" time in classrooms. Although the reading specialist, instructional coordinator, and LRC director have attended presentations about new books, more involvement is needed by classroom teachers to learn about new materials being published to participate in selecting new titles for the literacy closet.

River Woods teachers strongly value the importance of the daily sustained time for independent level reading as a necessary component of our balanced literacy program. The term "Read and Relax" originated at the school and is now used throughout the district in other elementary buildings. Several staff members work collaboratively with other district staffs in sharing the Literacy Closet and "Read and Relax" model. In addition, they consult with other area districts interested in developing this best practice in their schools. River Woods staff frequently hosts visiting schools who wish to replicate this work.

Resources

Time: Teachers pool current grade level reading materials, level them by difficulty, and establish the need for additional titles within benchmark levels. Clerical hours were used to bar code and organize the Literacy Closet.

Money: Building funds have provided a limited amount of books ranging in difficulty for the independent level reading component of our literacy program. Additional titles at all levels are needed for all students to fully use this literacy closet as intended.

People: Teachers and paraprofessionals developed the leveling system. LRC volunteers help tally reading minutes associated with at-home reading.

Evidence of Success

Building trend data from the One-Minute Rate and Accuracy Assessment shows the average reading rate increase:

January 96	January 97	January 98
1st Grade-58 wpm	2nd Grade-107wpm	3rd Grade-124wpm
2nd Grade-104 wpm	3rd Grade-125 wpm	4th Grade-130 wpm
3rd Grade-125 wpm	4th Grade-133 wpm	5th Grade-155 wpm

For 1996-97 the ITBS/COGAT 5th grade Vocabulary scores: SS - 215.3/Predicted SS 221.3/Differential +6.0. (Achievement was higher than predicted for ability.)

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

Joan Forman, Reading Specialist
Naperville School District 203
203 West Hillside
Naperville, IL 60540
630/420-6630
630/420-6961 (fax)

PALATINE DISTRICT 15 / Central Road School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 464 Grades: K-6	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-6
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 3: Planning
Socioeconomic Level: 17% low income	Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension
Ethnicity: 73% white, 1% Afro-American	Scope/Setting for the Practices: School Wide
21% Hispanic 4% Asian	

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Central Road School is currently implementing all of the reading best practices at varying, if not all, levels. All students are taught explicit word analysis skills including direct instruction in phonics. This strategy is used for the youngest students and older students who struggle due to limited-English proficiency and/or learning disabilities. A detailed analysis of IGAP and ITBS data is performed annually, and all students are assessed three times a year on local reading assessments to measure growth in reading ability. These data are used to plan for instruction in the classrooms on a regular basis. Using the Accelerated Reader Program, students read independently at their appropriate level every day. Time from recess and during the school day is used to enhance this important reading development strategy. All students receive reading instruction at their appropriate instructional level.

To develop comprehension skills, teachers use many and varied strategies and techniques (e.g., questioning skills, graphic organizers) in their pre-reading, during reading and post-reading activities. Groupings for reading instruction are flexible and small to meet the needs of all students. Integration of reading and writing across all content areas is a common practice. Beginning in first grade, students develop research projects and beginning in second grade, students begin writing standard essays in the expository and persuasive genres. Reading skills and strategies are taught through all content areas in all grade levels. A literacy rich environment is evident on every wall in the school. The learning center with its collection of several thousand books is the hub of the school with all classrooms centered on it. Libraries in all classrooms enhance the school building library.

Finally, family and community partnerships are a commitment of the building and the district as a whole. An active cadre of parent volunteers and senior citizens in the community regularly come to Central Road School as reading buddies to primary students. Family reading nights celebrate literacy and reading, and parent informational evenings are held where parents learn strategies to help their children become better readers.

Description of Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning to Create Independence through Student-Owned Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

In structuring each literacy lesson plan at *all* grade levels, teachers plan activities for before, during, and after the reading. These activities are specifically designed to help students develop reading comprehension. For example, teachers use the pre-reading strategies of vocabulary development, concept webs, and prediction. During reading activities include questioning, fluency work and word analysis instruction. Finally, teachers will use post-reading activities such as, summarization, making inferences, writing activities, and relating the reading to prior experiences.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

To accomplish this planning goal, teachers have worked and continue to work with experts in reading, such as Tim Shanahan and Charlene Cobb to enhance and refine planning strategies that teachers are currently using. Additionally, teachers work with the Title I Reading Consultant and collaborate to plan reading lessons that include all dimensions of the reading process. School-based professional development will be provided on the appropriate uses of the handbook of literacy strategies once it is developed. For the past two years, all teachers at Central Road School have attended expert reading consultant workshops focused on Dr. Patricia Cunningham's model of literacy instruction or on Tim Shanahan's balanced reading approach. Knowledge from this staff development carried over into the classroom and is used in the planning process.

Resources

The school district paid the reading consultants to carry out district-wide workshops concerning best practices related to reading pedagogy. Additionally, grade level teams meet before, during or after school every two weeks to plan for effective reading instruction that utilizes best practices. Reading comprehension is a teacher-generated goal of the school improvement plan and therefore a tremendous incentive for teachers to incorporate this practice into their teaching. For technology as a resource, the Accelerated Reader program requires a networked computer system, e.g., IBM or Mac.

Evidence of Success

Based on the research-based Accelerated Reader Program and its assessment tool STAR, significant improvements (an average of one and a half to three years growth) in the reading level of students in grades first through sixth have been documented. Modest increases in reading comprehension scores on the reading portion of the IGAP and ITBS assessments are indicative of improved reading comprehension that results from strong planning on the part of teachers.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Standardized Tests

Description of Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension Skills and Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

Central Road School is working closely with the district consultants to implement the four-block program of research-based balanced reading. This program includes shared and guided reading as one of the components. These strategies are used daily in all classrooms-as one fourth of the total time for reading instruction.

In shared reading, teachers model and provide direct instruction to students in the following areas: reading strategies for constructing meaning, developing self-monitoring, and meta-cognitive reading behaviors. Shared reading is done through both whole group and small groups.

Guided reading is done in flexible, dynamic groups with student placement based on unique needs for reading development. During guided reading, students have opportunities to read text at their instructional level and implement the comprehension strategies they have learned during shared reading instruction. In guided reading experiences, teachers observe students' use of reading comprehension strategies such as: summarizing, drawing inferences, making and confirming predictions, and making connection across texts. The teachers use the data and their observations to plan future instruction, modify growth and select reading material.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

For the past two years, teachers have participated in intensive staff development workshops on the four block balanced reading program. The blocks include Shared/Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Word Study, and Writing. The Reading and Language Arts Coordinator conducted the workshops. During these sessions, teachers were presented with the information based on the research of Dr. Patricia Cunningham, Gay Su Pinnell, Irene Fountas, and Tim Shanahan. In addition to the workshop groups, teacher leaders worked directly with teachers providing follow-up support for the staff development and modeling in the classrooms. The workshops were provided at varying intervals throughout the year. Each workshop resulted in the teachers implementing new classroom techniques.

Resources

Time was necessary for the teachers to attend the workshops as well as the consultant fees paid to the experts. Release time for the workshops and consultant fees were supported through district funds. Ongoing professional support is provided regularly through grade level

team meetings. Teachers in the primary levels were also provided with text sets (at a cost of approximately $2,000) to begin shared and guided reading instruction in their classrooms. For technology resources, the Accelerated Reader program requires a networked computer system, e.g., IBM or Mac.

Evidence of Success

Evidence of the success can be found by observing students progress in their reading comprehension ability as measured through local reading assessments, improved performance on Accelerated Reader which provides students opportunities to apply comprehension skills during independent reading, improvement in reading level as measured by the Star test, and long-term improvement in IGAP and ITBS scores.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

Jill R. Weininger, Principal
Central Road School
3800 Central Road
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
847/963-5100
847/963-5106 (fax)

PALATINE DISTRICT 15 / Jane Addams School

Data on School Demographics
School Size/Enrollment 568 Grades K-6
District/School Type Suburban
Socioeconomic Level 18 1% low income
Ethnicity 68 8% white, 10 8% Afro-American
9% Hispanic, 11 4% Asian

Data on Best Practices in Reading
Implemented at Grade Levels K-6
Best Practice 10 Building Comprehension
Best Practice 12 Integration
Scope/Setting for the Practices School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Jane Addams School is currently implementing at varying levels most, if not all, of the best practices. All students are taught explicit word analysis skills including direct instruction in phonics. This strategy is used for our youngest students, and older students who struggle due to limited English proficiency and/or learning disabilities. Assessment data are used to inform instruction. IGAP and ITBS data are analyzed annually, and all students are assessed three times a year on local reading assessments to measure growth in reading ability. These data are used to plan for instruction in the classrooms on a regular basis. Independent reading is a focal point. Using the Accelerated Reader Program, students read independently at their appropriate level every day. Time from recess and during the school day is used to enhance this important reading development strategy. All students receive reading instruction at their appropriate instructional level. Teachers use many and varied strategies and techniques in their pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities. These range from questioning skills to graphic organizers. Groupings for reading instruction are flexible and small so as to meet the needs of all students. Integration of reading and writing occurs across all content areas. Beginning in first grade, students develop research projects and beginning in second grade, students begin writing standard essays in the expository and persuasive genres. Reading skills and strategies are taught through all content areas in all grade levels. A literacy rich environment is evident at Jane Addams on every wall in the school. The learning center with its collection of several thousand books is the hub of the school with all classrooms centered on it. All classrooms have libraries that enhance our building library. Family and community partnerships are a commitment of the building and the district as a whole. Jane Addams School has an active PTA and a cadre of parent volunteers, and senior citizens in the community become reading buddies to primary students. Family reading nights celebrate literacy and reading, and at parent informational evenings parents learn strategies to help their children become better readers.

Description of Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension Skills and Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas

Implementation Strategies

Jane Addams is working closely with district consultants to implement the four-block program of research-based balanced reading. This program includes shared and guided reading as one of

the components. These strategies are used daily in all classrooms as one-fourth of the total time for reading instruction. In shared reading, teachers model and provide direct instruction to students in the following areas: reading strategies for constructing meaning, developing self-monitoring and metacognitive reading behaviors. Shared reading is done through both whole group and small groups. Guided reading is done in flexible, dynamic groups where students are placed based on unique needs for reading development. During guided reading, students have opportunities to read text at their instructional level and implement the strategies they have learned during shared reading instruction. In guided reading experiences, teachers observe student use of reading strategies such as: summarizing, drawing inferences, making and confirming predictions and making connection across texts.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

For the past two years, teachers have participated in intensive staff development workshops on the four block balanced reading program. The blocks include shared/guided reading, independent reading, word study and writing. The Reading and Language Arts Coordinator conducted the workshops. During these sessions, teachers were presented with the information based on the research of Patricia Cunningham, Gay Su Pinnell, Irene Fountas and Tim Shanahan. In addition to the workshop groups, teacher leaders worked directly with teachers providing follow-up support for the staff development and modeling in the classrooms.

Resources

Time was necessary for the teachers to attend the workshops as well as the consultant fees paid to the experts. Both of these were supported through district funds. On-going professional support is provided regularly through grade level team meetings. Teachers in the primary levels were also provided with text sets to begin shared and guided reading instruction in their classrooms.

Evidence of Success

Evidence of the success can be found by observing students progress in their reading and comprehension ability as measured through improved performance on Accelerated Reader which provides students opportunities to apply comprehension skills during independent reading, improvement in reading level as measured by STAR and long-term improvement in IGAP and ITBS scores.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Teacher observation/reporting

Description of Best Practice 12: Integration

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.

Implementation Strategies

Reading is an integral part of all subject areas at Jane Addams. Beginning in first grade, students do research projects and learn to connect reading, learning factual information, writing and presenting information. Integrated into content area instruction (e.g., science and social studies) are reading lessons related to fluency, vocabulary, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Additionally, relating writing activities to reading experiences is a common post-reading activity. Students use their reading experiences as models of good writing as well.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Teachers have been taught various techniques used to teach research skills. Teachers have consulted with experts such as Tim Shanahan, Sue Buckman and Charlene Cobb on techniques to use content area reading to teach students word knowledge and improve their fluency. Teachers have also consulted with teacher leaders on strategies they can implement to connect reading and writing with activities in science and social skills.

Resources

In implementing reading across the curriculum, a major resource is the Learning Resource Center and the Director of the LRC who collaborates with teachers to create research projects for students. It is necessary to maintain a collection of materials that cover a wide variety of topics and are a wide variety of reading levels. These materials are used by students to practice and further develop their skills in the area of reading and learning from the reading. Finally, access to the Internet, news media and other computer search tools are necessary to support reading comprehension improvement activities. These research activities directly connect to the writing process through culminating activities.

Evidence of Success

Beginning in first grade, students produce successful research projects. Scores on the IGAP in science and social sciences have modestly increased, and IGAP writing scores are excellent. Additionally, on the ITBS assessment, students scored very well in the area of research skills. Finally, on a locally given, nationally normed writing assessment, students scored significantly higher than the previous year.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

Charles Accardi, Principal
John G. Conyers, Ed.D, Superintendent
Palatine Community Consolidated School District 15
Jane Adams School
1020 Sayles Drive
Palatine, IL 60067
847/963-5000
847/934-0062 (fax)

PALATINE DISTRICT 15 / Lake Louise School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 840 Grades: K-6	Implemented at Grade Levels: K-6
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 1: Word Analysis Instruction
Socioeconomic Level: 29.2% low income	Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension
Ethnicity: 59.1% white, 5.6% Afro-American, 11% Hispanic, 11% Asian, .1% Native American	Scope/Setting for the Practices: School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

All students are taught explicit word analysis skills including direct instruction in phonics. This strategy is used for the youngest students, and older students who struggle due to limited-English proficiency, reading deficits and/or learning disabilities. Assessment data are used to clarify instruction and are becoming a focus for the building. IGAP and IT'BS data are analyzed annually and all students, grades 2-6, are assessed three times a year on local reading assessments to measure growth in reading ability. These data are used to plan for instruction in the classrooms on a regular basis. Using the Accelerated Reader Program, students read independently at their appropriate level every day. Time is set aside for silent reading and during the school day to enhance this important reading development strategy. All students receive reading instruction at their appropriate instructional level. Teachers use a plethora of strategies and techniques in their pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities to develop comprehension skills. These range from questioning skills to graphic organizers. Small groupings for reading instruction are flexible and encouraged to meet the needs of all students. Integration of reading and writing across all content areas is a common practice at Lake Louise School. Beginning in first grade, students develop research projects and beginning in second grade, students begin writing standard essays in the expository and persuasive genres. Reading skills and strategies are taught through all content areas in all grade levels. A literacy rich environment is evident at Lake Louise on every wall in our school. The learning center has a collection of several thousand books. All classrooms have libraries that enhance the building library. Finally, family and community partnerships are a commitment of the building and the district as a whole. An active PTA and an active cadre of parent volunteers works with students in various reading enrichment. The reading challenge encouraged family reading nights that celebrate literacy and reading. A Title I parent informational evening provided parents with strategies to help their children become better readers.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systematic Word Analysis Instruction, Including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

Implementation Strategies

During the 1997-98 school year, the teachers in grades kindergarten through second implemented the research-based word study program based on the work of Dr. Patricia

Cunningham. These strategies are also used with bilingual students and struggling readers at the upper grades. In kindergarten through second grades, teachers use both high frequency and benchmark pattern words that enable students to learn phonics and spelling in a contextualized manner. Teachers use word walls to teach phonics and spelling patterns. Additionally, daily word study activities provide students with extended time to manipulate and analyze words, word parts, individual sounds, and word families. Some teachers in grades 3-6 were instructed in word analysis and vocabulary development. These strategies are being used in various classrooms.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

For the past two years, teachers in kindergarten through second grade participated in intensive staff development workshops on the four block balanced reading program. The blocks include shared/guided reading, independent reading, word study, and writing. The Reading and Language Arts Coordinator conducted the workshops. During these sessions, teachers were able to learn and practice strategies for direct instruction in word study and phonics and implemented the strategies when they returned to the classroom. Additionally, the Title 1 teacher shared the information with upper grade teachers for use with struggling readers and bilingual students. A study group was conducted for staff members to share successful strategies used in classrooms.

Resources

Teachers attended four monthly workshops for a total of 12 hours of professional development related to these strategies. The district also provided copies of Patricia Cunningham's book, *Phonics They Use*. Teachers also received materials to implement word study in their classrooms. These materials included directions for setting up a word wall, sets of alphabet cards for use during word study activities, and pocket charts for word study activities.

Evidence of Success

Evidence can be found from data from the developmental spelling tests given to students in grades kindergarten through grade 3 three times a year. The number of younger children actively engaged in the independent reading program has shown an increase. Primary grades teachers report that significantly more students are developing the ability to read at an earlier age than in the past.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Other Development Spelling Test

Description of Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension Skills and Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons*

- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*

- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

Lake Louise School is working closely with district consultants to implement the four-block program of research-based balanced reading. This program includes shared and guided reading as one of the components. These strategies are used daily in classrooms as one fourth of the total time for reading instruction. In shared reading, teachers model and provide direct instruction to students in the following areas: reading strategies for constructing meaning, developing self-monitoring, and meta-cognitive reading behaviors. Shared reading is done through both whole group and small groups. During guided reading, students have opportunities to read text at their instructional level and implement the strategies they have learned during shared reading instruction. In guided reading experiences, teachers observe students' use of reading strategies such as summarizing, drawing inferences, making and confirming predictions, and making connections across texts.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

For the past two years, teachers have participated in intensive staff development workshops on the four-block balanced reading program. The blocks include shared/guided reading, independent reading, word study, and writing. The Reading and Language Arts Coordinator conducted the workshops. During these sessions teachers were presented with the information based on the research of Patricia Cunningham, Gay Su Pinnell, Irene Fountas, and Tim Shanahan. In addition to the workshop groups, teacher leaders worked directly with teachers providing follow-up support for the staff development and modeling in the classrooms.

Resources

Time was necessary for teachers to attend the workshops as well as the consultant fees paid to the experts. Both of these were supported through district funds. Ongoing professional support is provided regularly through study group meetings and grade level work. Additional time is provided for teachers to develop a handbook of literacy comprehension strategies that can be used by all teachers in the school and shared with other schools. Teachers in the primary levels were also provided with text sets to begin shared and guided reading instruction in their classrooms. Computers are used on a regular basis to monitor/chart student progress in many areas. Accelerated Reader is done completely on a computer system. This program also requires books to be purchased specific with data disks for the testing component.

Evidence of Success

Evidence of the success can be found by observing students' progress in their reading and comprehension ability as measured through local assessments, improved performance on

Accelerated Reader, which provides students opportunities to apply comprehension skills during independent reading, improvement in reading levels as measured by Star, the diagnostic measurement tool of the Accelerated Reader program, and long-term improvement in IGAP and ITBS.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

Cheryl A. Kmiecik, Principal (Contact Person)
Dr. John G. Conyers, Ed D., Superintendent
Palatine Community Unit School District 15
Lake Louise School
500 N. Jonathan
Palatine, IL 60067
847/963-5600
847/963-5606 (fax)

PLAINFIELD DISTRICT 202 / Plainfield High School

Data on School Demographics
School Size/Enrollment 1900-2000
District/School Type Suburban Grades 9-12
Socioeconomic Level 1.7% low income
Ethnicity 91% white, 1% Afro-American, 5.5% Hispanic, 1.25% Asian

Data on Best Practices in Reading
Implemented at Grade Levels 9
Best Practice 6 Independent Reading
Best Practice 7 Variety of Genre
Scope/Setting for the Practices Grade Level

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

During the 1997-1998 school year, District #202 began a program at Plainfield High School for at risk freshmen and continued with all English 9 classes. Staff identified 70 freshmen students and teamed them with four teachers from the academic areas of English, Math, Science and P.E./Health Wellness. The teachers in the program used three reading best practices. To encourage students to read, a Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) program was developed. This program provided daily opportunities for sustained reading. Each day, one of the four classroom teachers would allow the students to read for 15-20 minutes. The students had to read a book from a selection of 20 high interest books, which were selected by a reading specialist. Each student has a conference with one of his/her teachers who read the same book, answers comprehension and connection questions and keeps a reading log. Two additional practices incorporated cross-curricular writing and reading, allowing for a variety of experiences. Lessons in the four content areas would incorporate skills learned in English. Expectations of writing and reading were consistent in all four content areas. The English 9 curriculum is aligned with the State Standards for Language Arts. The Math, Science and P.E./Health teacher reinforced these standards by incorporating them into their lessons. Allowing two reading teachers to spend two periods a day with the team enhanced this program. Flexibility allows the two reading teachers to float among the four teachers to model lessons and team teach reading and writing strategies.

Description of Best Practice 6: Independent Reading

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

Implementation Strategies

At risk students were targeted as entering freshmen. These 70 identified students were placed with an English, Math, Science and P.E./Health Wellness teacher and began a Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) program. Students were required to read 15-20 minutes everyday in one of the four classes. A different class was selected every day. The teacher modeled behavior by reading a book of his/her own choice. Students selected from 15-20 high interest fiction books. A reading consultant selected books. Each of the four teachers read two to five books. Students meet in a conference with a teacher who read the book, answer 6-10 questions on comprehension, and make connections to personal life. Students wrote up a reading log.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

The four academic teachers and two reading teachers attended various conferences and shared information they received. Workshops attended: Eye to the Future: Focus on Literacy; Strengthening Your Student Reading and Writing of Informational Text; Reading Performance Assessment; IGAP and Reading Strategies Grades 6-12; Helping At Risk Students Develop Greater Motivation, Respect & Self Discipline; and Difficult Students: How to Unlock Their Potential. After attending conferences, the teacher(s) would inservice the team on what they had learned and shared materials. The team would then decide how they would incorporate a new strategy. Two conferences that the team felt were most helpful were IGAP and Reading Strategies, grade 6-12 and Helping At Risk Students Develop Greater Motivation.

Resources

4 Team Teachers (Math, Science, P.E./Health, English), 2 Specialists in Reading
A $500 mini-grant from Foundation for Excellence was used to purchase books.
Each teacher devoted his/her own time to reading books; questions were developed during team planning time. Teachers conferenced with students outside of class during free period and/or lunch.

Evidence of Success

70 students participated. 53 students completed all requirements (read book, conferenced with teacher, answered questions, maintained reading log). 10 students completed more than 1 book. 17 students read the book, but did not complete additional assignment like conferencing or reading log. Only seven out of 70 students did not read a book.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Surveys/Interviews
☒ Other: Completion of assignments

Description of Best Practice 7: Variety of Genre

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

Students identified as at risk are teamed for Math, English, Science and P.E./Health. Teachers plan together and coordinate assignments to incorporate narrative, expository and persuasive writing. Creative writing includes dialogue, RAFT (Role, Audience, Form, Topic), and poetry. Major assignments have to be four to five paragraphs; all other assignments are three paragraphs. Reading genres include fiction, non-fiction, biography, and technical. Students maintained a portfolio of their work throughout the year.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

The two reading specialists work with the team, model appropriate strategies, and team-teach lessons with the content area teacher during specific assignments. In addition, the teachers have attended workshops on the following: Eye to the Future: Focus on Literacy; Strengthening Your Students Reading and Writing of Informational Text. Portfolio Connection; Helping At Risk Students Develop Greater Motivation, Respect & Self Discipline; Difficult Students: How to Unlock Their Potential.

Resources

4 team teachers (Math, Science, P.E./Health, English) - 4 classes each
2 Specialists in Reading - each worked 2 periods with Team
3 periods a week for Team planning
30 hours of curriculum work during summer (paid at $19.76 per hour)
Registration fees for workshops paid through staff development money

Evidence of Success

Anecdotal records compiled by teachers show that students will volunteer to read aloud and do not have to be called on. Students indicate to teachers when they were reading something not assigned. Parent comments indicated outside reading was taking place. Records of books read were kept as part of the DEAR program. Students were required to read three DEAR books. Some students read more than the required number; one student read 11 books. Teacher observations and reporting reveal that students exhibit deeper processing skills and understanding exhibited by their written and verbal responses to questions. A reading pre-test was given in August; the post test has not been administered to date. This testing was done as part of a master's thesis of one of the team teachers. The analysis was to take place during the summer of 1998. No quantitative data are available until the fall of 1998. An attitude toward school survey was given in August, but the post survey has not been administered to date. The survey was given as part of another teacher's master's thesis which was to be written over the summer.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - Post Measures ☒ Teacher observation/reporting
☒ Products evaluated against a rubric ☒ Surveys/Interviews

For more information, contact:

Eve Panice, Director of Instruction (Contact Person)
Dr. David Stanfield, Superintendent
Plainfield Consolidated School District 202
500 West Fort Beggs Drive
Plainfield, Illinois 60544
815/436-3200 815/439-2882 (fax)

RIVERSIDE DISTRICT 96 / Ames Elementary School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment: 202 Grades: K-5	Implemented at Grade Levels: Kindergarten
District/School Type: Suburban	Best Practice 1: Word Analysis
Socioeconomic Level: 4.5% low income	Best Practice 2: Assessment
Ethnicity: 90.1% white, 1.5% Afro-American 6.9% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian	Scope/Setting for the Practices: Grade Level

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Riverside Public School District 96 implemented a pilot phonemic awareness intervention program at Ames Elementary School in January of 1998. The intervention model used focuses on direct instruction of phonological awareness skills. The target group was comprised of eight (8) kindergarten children at Ames School. They were identified using Dr. Roland Good's Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) as a pretest. The DIBELS was also used as an ongoing assessment. It was administered to the target group in February and April of 1998 in order to make necessary revisions to the direct instruction and to note student progress within the target group.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systemic Word Analysis Instruction, Including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections

Implementation Strategies

The Ames Elementary School Phonological Awareness Intervention Program focused on preventing reading difficulties through identifying an at-risk kindergarten population during January of 1998. This at-risk population received explicit instruction utilizing a pull out format. The reading specialist and aide at Ames Elementary School deliver the instruction.

The direct, systematic instruction was delivered to the target population 4 times a week for 30 minutes per day from January through May. The direct, systematic instruction focused on three elements of phonological awareness:

1. Blending of sounds
2. Rhyming
3. Segmentation

The reading specialist and aide utilized picture cards to address beginning, middle, and ending sounds.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

To prepare for the implementation of the direct-instruction phonological awareness intervention program, the reading specialist attended a two day LaGrange Area District Special Education Cooperative seminar titled "Early Literacy: Linking Assessment to Intervention." The presenter was Dr. Roland Good from the University of Oregon. This was no charge to District 96.

The first day of the seminar addressed the assessment piece. Dr. Good presented a research-based assessment tool that could be used to identify children deficient in phonological awareness skills. The assessment is called the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). This became the tool to identify the target population in the second semester of kindergarten.

Dr. Good presented an intervention model on the second day of the seminar. The model was designed to remediate children deficient in phonological awareness skills through the direct instruction application of the Torgeson and Bryant Phonological Awareness Training for Reading program. The intervention program is reinforced with the Daisy Quest Software. Using this software, students deficient in phonological awareness receive extrinsic motivation to improve in a repetition of skills format.

Resources

The DIBELS was used as a pretest. It was administered to all kindergarten children in January 1998. The reading specialist at Ames School gave the pretest in seven hours. The reading aide at Ames School was trained in the use of the phonological awareness intervention model in 3 hours. The intervention instruction is delivered through the reading specialist and aide 4 days a week for 30 minutes per day.

The Torgeson and Bryant Phonological Awareness Instruction kit was purchased for Ames School at a cost of $140. The Daisy Quest Software bought for reinforcement was $40.00 per computer. Two copies of the book, *Phonemic Awareness in Young Children*, were purchased at $25 each. The total cost to implement the intervention pilot program at Ames School was $230.

The target population included eight kindergarten children. The reading specialist and aide identified these children and applied the intervention instruction.

For technology as a resource, the Daisy Quest Software was used as reinforcement. The software provided incentives for the repetitive practice of the skills taught in the explicit instruction of the phonological awareness program.

Evidence of Success

Eight kindergarten children in the target group received the pullout intervention instruction. The pretest and ongoing assessment scores show that six of the eight children have shown improved scores in the areas of onset fluency, and segmentation. All eight children have shown improvement in alphabet identification.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - post Measures

Description of Best Practice 2: Assessment to Inform Instruction

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.

Implementation Strategies

In January 1998, the reading specialist administered the DIBELS to all kindergarten students as a pretest. Dr. Good's DIBELS was used to identify a target group of second semester kindergarten children deficient in phonological awareness skills. The DIBELS measure the following early literacy skills:

1. Letter naming fluency or alphabet identification.
2. Onset fluency or the naming of beginning of the word sounds.
3. Phonemic segmentation or the ability to break words down into different phonemes.

In February and April of 1998, the target population of eight kindergarten children deficient in phonological awareness skills were administered ongoing assessment alternate forms. The DIBELS were used to determine progress of the children and possible revisions to instruction.

All kindergarten students received the post-test in May of 1998. This assessment was another form of DIBELS. From these results, decisions regarding instruction for the target population as first graders were made. In addition the assessment results will be used to develop informed decisions regarding integrating phonological awareness skills into the regular kindergarten classroom curriculum.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

The reading specialist attended a LaGrange Area District Special Education sponsored two-day Dr. Roland Good seminar. The specialist received the necessary assessment training through these sessions.

Resources

Time for the phonological awareness assessment is broken down into three phases: pretest, ongoing, and post-test. The DIBELS is utilized in all three phases. The pretest takes seven hours to administer. Kindergarten enrollment is 42 children. The ongoing assessment of the target population, given in February and April, took a total of two hours. The post-test, given in May, took seven hours.

The DIBELS is the assessment tool for phonological awareness deficiencies. Twenty forms of this assessment are available. The reading specialist obtained this at the two-day Dr. Good seminar at no charge.

The reading specialist administers all three phases of the assessment.

Evidence of Success

Evidence of the success of the assessment model is found in the 1996 research of Kaminski and Good. It should be noted that Kaminski and Good's DIBELS is only one element of a comprehensive phonological awareness assessment model. It should be supplemented by observational data of pre reading skills as demonstrated by children during routine classroom activities. The kindergarten teachers noted increased participation and correct responses of the targeted students during their reading program, particularly in the area of the targeted

phonological awareness skills Comparison of the January and May data of the entire kindergarten population showed that the DIBELS assessment tool was able to measure the increased phonological awareness in all three test areas

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Other DIBELS

For more information, contact:

Linda Farley, Principal (Contact Person)
Dr David J Bonnette, Superintendent
Riverside Public School District 96
63 Woodside Road
Riverside, IL 60546
708/447-0759
708/447-3252 (fax)

SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT 186 / Fairview School

Data on School Demographics	Data on Best Practices in Reading
School Size/Enrollment 300 Grade levels K-4	Implemented at Grade Levels K-2
District/School Type Urban	Best Practice 1 Word Analysis
Socioeconomic Level 64 2% low income	Best Practice 6 Independent Reading
Ethnicity 68 2% white, 31 8% Afro-American	Scope/Setting for the Practices School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Fairview School, an urban school on the northeast side of Springfield, serves approximately 300 students in grades K-4. Some students are bused to maintain a racial balance. Approximately 54 percent of students are low income, and the school has a mobility rate of 33 percent. The Reading Recovery program is in place to accelerate learning for the lowest first grade readers. The reading program at Fairview is based on the Houghton Mifflin basal program that was adopted by Springfield District 186 two years ago. Most of the K-2 teachers at the school have taken an early literacy course provided by the district which prepared teachers to incorporate guided reading into the reading program to reach all readers at their level. The K-2 teachers have also enhanced the basic basal program by providing a wide variety of books for students to read independently.

Literacy is the highest priority in the primary classrooms at Fairview School. Because research shows kindergarten through second grade to be an absolutely critical time for teaching children to read well, the school has evaluated what educators should do to make the most of the instructional time and resources available, researched current literature, taken advantage of inservice opportunities, and begged, borrowed and hoarded good children's books of varying levels. Guided reading, the technique of instructing small groups of children in reading using leveled sets of books, has become an important part of the total reading program because it enables students to reach their level of ability.

Since the majority of Fairview students come from lower to middle-income levels where literacy materials are not plentiful, the children are exposed to a variety of written materials, some of which they take home to read. The range of ability levels within the classrooms is broad and the needs of the group are well met by the flexible grouping inherent in guided reading practices. This year, all students see themselves as readers because they each have books that they can read well.

Students need many opportunities throughout the school day to practice and enjoy reading independently. The school has begun building a collection of fiction and non-fiction books covering a range of difficulty levels to suit every child. Students enjoy having a book in hand not only when the whole class is reading, but also when they are waiting in line, or even during free-choice time.

In each of the last two years, systematic instruction in word study has increased. Time is planned daily for phonemic awareness and word study, in addition to focusing attention on print in the classroom by using word walls and labels, and seeing an increase in students' understanding of word analysis.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systematic Word Analysis Instruction, including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons*

- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience

Implementation Strategies

Word wall and word of the day activities are used in the classrooms. Children expand their list of known words and use known words to read or write new words. Using phonemic awareness helps students to identify and manipulate spoken sounds. In making words, students manipulate and construct word parts and become familiar with spelling patterns.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Many teachers read professional books, e.g., *Phonics They Use* by Patricia Cunningham, *Making Words* by Patricia Cunningham and Dorothy Hall, "Developing Phonemic Awareness" by Hallie Yopp from *The Reading Teacher*, May 1992. Some teachers have had the opportunity to hear a presentation by Hallie Yopp. During reading roundtable discussions at noon, teachers reflect with other teachers on a monthly basis about literacy ideas. Teachers participated in Phonemic Awareness Sessions at the Illinois Reading Conference in March 1998.

Resources

These resources of time and money are being used at Fairview School:

Time: Teachers devote out-of-school time to read the books and articles. In the classroom these word knowledge activities take approximately 30-40 minutes throughout the day.

Money: The cost of the above books was approximately $50 per teacher. Harcourt Brace Consultants paid for the presentation by Hallie Yopp.

Evidence of Success

In September 1997, 21 of the lowest first graders at Fairview School (as determined by end-of-year kindergarten testing) were given the Clay Observation Survey. On the Word Test, the average score was 2/20. On the Hearing and Recording Sounds In Word Test, the average score was 10/37. On the Writing Vocabulary Test, the average score was 6. At mid-year the average Word Test score was 7/20, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words was 27/37, and Writing Vocabulary was 23. It was clear that even the lowest achieving first graders progressed in word knowledge and sound control. At mid-year, the teacher and Title I aide also observed more independent writing and fluent reading among all students than in past years. In September, the average Word Test results in second grade were 70/100 Dolch sight words; by spring the average score was 190/200 Dolch sight words.

Evaluation or Evidence of Effectiveness

☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Surveys

Description of Best Practice 6: Independent Reading

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works

Implementation Strategies

Children need to read and reread massive amounts of increasingly harder levels of text to become fluent, engaged and confident readers. They need opportunities for free choice of books and quality time to read on their own, even at the earliest levels.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Professional reading provided a strong rationale (*Classrooms that Work* by Cunningham and Allington and *When Writers Read* by Hansen). An inservice by Mark Vineis of Mondo Publishing Company provided insight into helping students select appropriate books. Teachers understand and believe in the value of encouraging self-selection of books and of children spending large amounts of time reading and rereading books at comfortable levels. Teachers have the willingness to provide opportunities for this reading during the school day.

Resources

These resources of time and money are already being used at Fairview School.

Time: Teachers have allotted time in the school day for independent reading, which required prioritizing subject matter and focusing on literacy in the early grades.

Money: Teachers have spent their own money and held raffles and bake sales to earn money to begin accumulating a variety of books. Also Title 1 money has provided some books.

People: Classroom teachers planned for independent reading with help from community volunteers who came weekly to listen to individual children read.

Evidence of Success

All students "act like" readers, knowing they have books at hand which they can read successfully. Many choose reading over other activities during free time. Running records of text accuracy indicate that 80 percent of the students are reading at or above grade level.

Evaluation or Evidence of Effectiveness

☒ Other: running records, observations

For more information, contact:

Linda Johnson and Nancy Waters, Teachers
Fairview School
2200 Ridgely Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702
217/525-3211
217/525-3286 (fax)

SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 186 / Hay Edwards School

Data on School Demographics
School Size/Enrollment: 400 Grades: EC-4
District/School Type: Urban
Socioeconomic Level: 79% low income
Ethnicity: 49.4% white, 50% Afro-American
6% Asian

Data on Best Practices in Reading
Implemented at Grade Levels: K-1
Best Practice 1: Word Analysis
Best Practice 13: Literacy Rich Environment
Scope/Setting for the Practices: Grade Level

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Hay Edwards School is an urban school located near the capitol complex in Springfield with approximately 400 students enrolled in early childhood classes through fourth grade. The school has three self-contained special needs classes. The school-wide reading program uses the Timothy Shanahan learning framework in conjunction with the 1998 edition of the Houghton Mifflin reading series, *Invitations to Literacy*. Title 1 and special education teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to support and enhance instruction through guided reading groups, re-teaching strategies and skills in small pull-out groups, and small group instruction within the classroom. Reading Recovery will be implemented this year as another early intervention program.

The kindergarten teachers have provided a literacy rich learning environment. The physical room arrangements provide for whole group activities centering around a big book easel and pocket charts, as well as small group learning centers. Walls are filled with print—teacher-made, commercially produced, and student-created. Print is at the students' eye level. The children incorporate this print into their play, and they understand that print has meaning and purpose. Students have shown dramatic gains in word analysis through daily use of the morning message for students to learn how print works. The teacher prints the morning message on chart paper as a preview and discussion of the day's activities. The students have learned left to right progression and return sweep, gained one to one matching, understand punctuation, understand that reading makes sense (use of context), and know letter sound correlation.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systematic Word Analysis Instruction, Including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience

Implementation Strategies

Kindergarten students are taught word analysis strategies when teachers use the children's names as words and focus on visual discrimination activities with the use of various media, e.g., highlighting, wikki sticks, playdough, magnetic letters, paint, etc. Children learn how to look at print as they work with their own name, thus working from a known commodity. Phonemic awareness and vocabulary are continually taught and reinforced through the daily reading of the morning message, poems, big books, children's literature, writing, and conversation. Phonics skills are taught as children are taught how to go from letter to sound as they take words apart in the reading of the classroom materials and in guided reading. The phonics skills are utilized by the children in daily writing of journals, letters, invitations, thank you notes, etc. as they go from sound to the printed letter. Students begin cross checking their word analysis strategies as they make predictions about missing words in the morning message. They are supported in their attempts through the use of context cues, visual cues and structural analysis cues. All word analysis strategies are integrated throughout the day as teachers think aloud, model, and discuss literature and print with the students.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

This practice has been implemented more since the teachers received training from Tim Shannahan on word study in 1996-97. The district contracted with Tim Shannahan to give workshops over a year's time on word study, fluency, comprehension, and writing. The inservices were five-days and all reading teachers attended and then took the information back to their buildings and workshops at the buildings to give the information to all classroom teachers. Reading recovery teachers have also demonstrated how to work with words using magnetic letters and the importance of teaching analogies and onset and rimes. Other development in this area has been from district literacy classes, kindergarten workshops and conferences, and graduate level coursework in early childhood and literacy. Another source of information has been provided by having a trained reading recovery teacher work in the classrooms and model some of the word analysis strategies.

Resources

The implementation of this practice has occurred over the past three years as teachers have attended inservices, and the focus has been on a balanced literacy approach with equal emphasis on word study, fluency, comprehension, and writing. It has taken a lot of teacher time to rearrange classrooms to effectively teach the needed skills in a developmentally appropriate manner, using small flexible groups as well as whole group instruction. Teachers purchase and make materials on their own. A lot of time and money has been spent by teachers, aides, and administrators to help implement this practice. Some of the materials that are needed include magnetic trays, chart tablets, easels for charts, poems on charts, writing journals, word walls, and overhead projector. Other in-kind resources are one teacher, one aide, support from reading teacher.

Evidence of Success

Dramatic gains have been made this year in the area of word analysis as evidenced by the results on the kindergarten literacy assessment which has been given quarterly. These data, which include letter and sound recognition, concepts about print, phonemic awareness and writing are available for review. The Kindergarten Literacy Survey is part of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series. The screening is given in September for the beginning of the year results and then in January, March and May. Individual scores are on file for each student. For the beginning of the year in concepts of print, 72% of the students were developing or emerging; at the end of the year 100% of students were satisfactory or above. At the beginning of the year,

on letter knowledge 66% of the students recognized less than 50% of letters; at end of the year 97% knew all the letters. At the beginning of the year of 19 high frequency words, 80% of the students knew zero or one word; at the end of the year, 87% knew 50% or more and 44% knew 17-19 of the 19 words. The informal assessment done daily as the teachers observe students reading and writing has proven to us that the time spent on teaching word analysis has been time well spent. By the end of the semester most all of the students knew all of the letters because they use them daily in reading and writing authentic text.

Methods Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Pre - Post Measures

☒ Products evaluated against a rubric ☒ Other: anecdotal records

Description of Best Practice 13: Literacy Rich Environment

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*

- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*

- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

A classroom environment is provided which displays and utilizes big and little books, poems, charts, songs and nursery rhymes written on large chart paper, a printed morning message, and a word wall. Daily independent reading is fostered by the use of book tubs on the children's tables as well as a well-supplied reading and listening center. Shared reacting, guided reading, teacher read alouds and whole class reading occur through a variety of quality children's literature, teacher made books, and class and student-created books. Shared writing products (charts, lists, graphs, diagrams) done on large paper are displayed in the room and halls and read by the students. The students love to read around the room and engage in many writing activities such as writing the room, writing in journals, invitations, thank you notes, etc. The room set up of each kindergarten class supports whole group, small group and individual instruction by providing centers with the appropriate materials for the type of activity to occur in each area. In addition to the reading and writing, the students are given many opportunities for language development through speaking and listening activities.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

All teachers have received training in implementation of the Tim Shanahan Literacy Framework, attended an inservice by J. David Cooper on a Balanced Literacy Program, and participated in literacy services offered by the district. Teachers have varied training in the following areas: reading recovery training, graduate course work in reading and early childhood, early literacy class (guided reading), and attendance at professional conferences (e.g., kindergarten, reading, and reading recovery.) The use of professional resources (books, periodicals) and sharing ideas from this professional reading have added to teachers' professional development. Teachers are aware of the importance of a print-rich environment and are motivated to rearrange classrooms and display printed materials around their rooms.

Resources

The implementation of this practice has evolved over the past two to three years as teachers have attended inservices and read material and the Title 1 teachers have collaborated to align teaching with meaningful activities that support how children learn best while also meeting the state's academic learning standards. While the district has committed funds for professional development and encouraged attendance, many materials and professional resources to implement this practice have been at the teachers' personal expense. Teachers, administrators, aides, and consultants have collaborated on this project. Some of the materials needed for this practice include chart tablets, chart holders, pocket charts, posters, and word walls. Time is needed to write charts, poems, songs, nursery rhymes.

Evidence of Success

Informal assessment of students' progress is made as students engage in reading and writing activities, and it is noted what reading strategies they are using and what they are neglecting. Formal assessments are done four times throughout the year assessing the children's knowledge of print (punctuation, left-to-right progression, return sweep, know a letter, word, sentence, one-to-one awareness, capital letters), letter and sound knowledge, ability to read words, writing, and phonemic awareness. These test data have shown remarkable gains even for the at-risk student and are on file with each classroom teacher. Baseline data are collected in the fall using the Kindergarten Literacy Survey which is part of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series. The same survey was then given in January, March, and May. [Refer to prior description in Best Practice 1 description.]

Methods Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre - Post Measures ☒ Performance Assessment
☒ Products evaluated against a rubric ☒ Other: Anecdotal records

For more information, contact:

Shari Hibbert, Principal
Hay Edwards School
400 West Lawrence
Springfield, IL 62704
217/525-3220
217/525-3348 (fax)

TOLONO DISTRICT 7 / Sidney Grade School

Data on School Demographics
School Size/Enrollment 169 Grade levels K-3
District/School Type Rural
Socioeconomic Level 13.4% low income
Ethnicity 97% white, 3% Afro-American

Data on Best Practices in Reading
Implemented at Grade Levels K-3
Best Practice 12 Integration
Best Practice 14 School/Family/Community
Scope/Setting for the Practices Grade Level
School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

The Sidney Grade School, one of five elementary buildings in Tolono District 7, is located in the small community of Sidney, approximately ten miles south of Champaign-Urbana. The small district has made a commitment to the teaching of reading by employing reading specialists in each of the five elementary buildings. The Sidney Grade School reading program is now more student-focused than content-focused, which encourages reading and writing across the curriculum and involves family and community as extended partners in students' literacy.

Providing authentic reading/writing experiences is one of the school improvement goals, and teachers work together to ensure that this critical component happens. Although the school has a basal reading series, teachers are moving away from the text to using trade books and student work. The staff makes literature relevant by tying the stories to the student's life, providing authentic experiences that are meaningful to students, and creating an understanding of cultural diversity through rich and diverse experiences. Reading and writing are nurtured at the school and viewed as a way to know the students (e.g., conferencing). The theme for the 1998-99 school year is *Reading Takes You Everywhere*. Student work is posted everywhere throughout the building. Teachers share a philosophy to show the students what they are good at and build confidence in reading and writing.

Because family and community involvement is wide spread in this small community, the Sidney Grade School thrives as a focal point and a community center where literacy connections are made. Families are encouraged to read together daily. Community volunteers are visible in the school. Groups of dedicated senior citizens from the community come each afternoon to read and talk with children—pairs of young faces and older faces simply enjoying a story together. The school staff actively recruit community residents to interact with students in literacy building situations. This collaborative team of community, family, and school members consistently provides high quality literacy experiences for the Sidney Grade School students.

Description of Best Practice 12: Integration

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of purposes*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

Implementation Strategies

Collaborative teacher teams have planned multidisciplinary units that integrate multiple reading and writing opportunities. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their reading and writing.

e.g., what book they enjoyed most, the writing they are most proud of and why, and any changes they would make in their writing. Students' opportunities for writing extend beyond the language arts lesson to math, science, social studies and fine arts. An example can be seen in math lessons at all levels. Many lessons are designed to allow students not only to give answers but also to explain and discuss through writings how answers are achieved. Workbooks have been given up in preference for trade books. Teachers realize that they can teach grammar without a book and spelling lists come from most common words. Students see the correlation between writing and spelling.

Students are writing at home, wanting to share writing, writing more frequently, and writing more independently, even when not assigned. Student writing is kept in portfolios. Students write frequently in draft journals. During student participation with an artist from the community, students were given daily opportunities to keep a journal and reflect on experiences. A writing workshop is in place, and reading workshop is beginning. A team teaching project based on *The Jolly Postman* story provided opportunity for writing across the curriculum (math, art, life skills, social studies, and language arts). A student newsletter, *Write Stuff*, contains actual student handwritten work that is scanned onto the page, and by end of the school year every student will be published.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Sidney Elementary School teachers participated in district-wide professional development, e.g., multiple intelligence, portfolio assessment, learning styles, critical thinking, literacy learning. The staff attends as many training sessions as possible. Ongoing staff interest in professional growth, administrative encouragement, and a shared vision of school literacy provide a positive, supportive environment at Sidney Grade School.

Teachers have regular time to develop units that integrate curriculum and provide positive, relevant and meaningful learning opportunities. Some collaboration takes place after school at teachers' own scheduling, and stipends are paid from Goals 2000 grant funds. Teachers use an Adaptation Plan (Group and Individual) sheet with these columns: time/subject, class plan, adaptation or modifications, staff responsible, comments. Through a grant from the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, teachers have visited other schools and use this form to outline strategies for their own classrooms and determine how to vary instruction for students' needs.

Resources

Funds from the school improvement budget are used for the professional development opportunities necessary for implementation of this practice. Funding for collaborative planning time is provided through the district's Goals 2000 Grant. This regularly scheduled collaboration time ensures that reading and writing are integral parts of all curricular planning and that the units of study are adapted for children at all skill levels. The school principal is resourceful and has acquired many grants, e.g., Goals 2000, K-6 Arts (Artist in Residence), Ag in the Classroom, Best Practices in Reading, Learn and Serve.

Evidence of Success

Prior to this project, almost all student writing was directly related to assignments from our textbooks. Now children have portfolios of writing related to all subject areas. Students'

enthusiasm for reading has increased with the school's effort to provide related reading materials and individual conferences with students about what they have learned. Students' reading and writing have improved in quantity and quality at the school.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Standardized Tests
☒ Surveys/Interviews ☒ Other: Portfolios

Description of Best Practice 14: School/Family/Community Partnerships

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature representative of various societies, eras, and ideas.*

- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

Implementation Strategies

Staff, family and community members work together to address needs of students. The staff developed several activities through needs assessment, brainstorming, and school improvement planning strategies.

The Sidney Family Reading Club recognizes students who read daily with their parents. Families read together each night, and a calendar is sent home to record the reading time. Co-reading between child and adult is encouraged especially at grade 3.

The Take-home Book Bags, a collaborative project between the school and the local agricultural extension agency, supply families with reading activities to share. Students make choices about the level of reading by selecting books of interest from any basket to take home.

At the Family Portfolio Night, which is a celebration of student progress not a traditional parent-teacher night, parents review students' work. Work will begin on developing a rubric for the portfolio (some entries are mandated by district, others are selected by students). Parent conferences are held two nights to allow time for family talk.

The Fall into Reading Family Literacy Night, funded by an early intervention grant, has activities for families to do that night and also take home. Other events are a book give away and an *All About Me* book written by every student.

The Senior Citizen Literacy Volunteer Corps read daily with students. The school library is staffed daily entirely by parents/community volunteers. All the classes also visit the community library. An artist in residence involves members of the community and provides literacy experiences/programs.

Sidney Grade School has created SQUIRT—Sidney Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time. Sometime during the day each classroom has 15-20 minutes of sustained silent reading. The school had tried to synchronize time for this activity but has determined that classroom teachers will work the time within instruction rather than schoolwide. The idea is to read for pleasure, and students can bring in materials from home or select something in the classroom. During this time, a SQUIRT poster is hung outside the classroom door to restrict interruptions. A local vendor has donated bottles of the soft drink, Squirt, to used for incentives.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

No formal professional development was provided, however, teachers participated in a variety of continuous learning experiences, e.g., attendance at workshops and conferences, graduate coursework, attendance of professional organizations' meetings, discussion with other teachers, district inservices and collaboration meetings. An agreement in professional philosophy has given the staff impetus and desire to actively involve the community in the literacy experiences of the community's children.

Resources

All time is donated to implement the programs. Staff and community volunteers donate time on a daily basis to assure the success of the program. The Parent-Teacher Organization provided approximately $500 to fund the Sidney Family Reading Club. The funding for the Take-home Book bags was obtained through the acquisition of a Farm Bureau-sponsored grant. Learn and Serve grant funds were used to buy more books for the intergenerational reading.

Evidence of Success

The reading scores have stabilized or improved since community involvement has accelerated. Book circulation at the school library and community library has increased. Evidence of authentic student writing experiences is rising. Over 100 senior citizens attended the senior citizen banquet. Family reading time has flourished. A three-year program of Reading Calendar to mark at-home reading experiences has shown a 50% participation and during the month of September 1998, 81% participation. Attendance at school events is increasing. The climate of the school community is becoming more positive.

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Pre- and post Measures ☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Surveys/Interviews

For more information, contact:

Mary Weaver, Principal (Contact Person)
Sidney Grade School
P.O. Box 590
Sidney, IL 61877
217/688-2821
217/688-2821 (fax)

Community Unit School District 7
Donald Mulch II, Superintendent
P.O. Box S
Tolono, Illinois 61880
217/485-3091

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V.I.T. SCHOOL DISTRICT 2

Data on School Demographics
School Size/Enrollment: 259 Grades: preK-6
District/School Type: Rural
Socioeconomic Level: 39% low income
Ethnicity: 100% white

Data on Best Practices in Reading
Implemented at Grade Levels: preK-6
Best Practice 13: Literacy Rich Environment
Best Practice 14: Family / Community
Scope/Setting for the Practices: Classroom
School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

V.I.T. Elementary School is a small rural school in northwestern Fulton County. Three neighboring small towns, Vermont, Ipava, and Table Grove, consolidated to form the unit district, hence the acronym, V.I.T. Besides the elementary school, there is a junior/senior high school.

V.I.T. Elementary is an excellent example of how people make the difference. Historically the administration and faculty have chosen to use Title I and Reading Improvement dollars to fund additional reading teachers and an aide as a reading resource for the classroom teachers. These extra reading teachers work closely with the classroom teachers in flexible instructional modes (e.g. team teaching, small group teaching within or outside the classroom, individual student tutoring, individual assessment, and school-wide activities and events). Regular, common lesson planning time has been scheduled by the Title I teachers to promote coordination. Over the years, these special reading teachers have planned a multitude of fun and motivating school-wide reading activities and events that have unified the school and brought the communities into the school as well as taken the school into the communities.

At the core of the reading program is the basal reading series, which has been updated regularly. However, the superintendent/elementary principal has always afforded classroom teachers the autonomy to use their own judgement as to how to modify, supplement and enrich the basal. Teachers use the basal as one resource but do not feel tied to it. A large, well-maintained school library, as well as extensive classroom libraries, provides the majority of the reading material the children read. Teachers are constantly striving to integrate the teaching of reading with other content areas such as writing (now practically inseparable from reading), social studies, science and math.

V.I.T. Elementary School is providing a literacy-rich environment for its students by displaying their written work in the classrooms, hallways, and library, publishing and sharing student work with others, using both snail mail and E-mail for student pen pals. Reading specialists, librarians, Title I teachers, the school librarian, and community members all work with the classroom teacher to support whole group, small group and individual instruction. Family and community members collaboratively support the literacy development of students through projects and events such as Family Math Nights, Read Across America, Reading Is Fundamental, Book Fairs, Homework Hangout and Friday Night Prime Time reading lock-ins for upper elementary students. Through the current practice of DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) students read independently. The school truly has a team approach to school-wide literacy.

Description of Best Practice 13: Literacy Rich Environment

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

Implementation Strategies

Literacy-rich environments display words and print everywhere, provide opportunities for students to engage in reading and writing activities and celebrate their reading and writing efforts. Students in grades K-6 participate through language experience stories, "Drop Everything And Read" periods, teacher read alouds, "Writers' Workshops," journal writing, Buddy Readers (pairing of older students with younger students), hallway displays of literature activities, Puppet Theater Productions, student book publishing, morning messages, Jamaica Pen Pal Project, student dictionaries maintained for grades 1-3, weekly librarian and art extension activities, Internet searches and E-mail, Community Guest Readers, and word processing with *Alpha Smarts*. To motivate and support reading and writing, each classroom has an extensive collection of reading materials including a wide range of high-interest fiction and non-fiction books at appropriate reading levels. The room design supports whole group, small group and individual instruction, and teachers have participated in professional development activities to effectively utilize this room design.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Teachers have participated in professional development activities to effectively use this room design. Teachers regularly attend the Illinois Reading Conference, IASCD Kindergarten Conference, Title I State Conference, and the Western Illinois University Reading Conference and share with other teachers in the elementary building during faculty meetings. Discussions during faculty meetings resulted in the submission and receipt of a Goals 2000 proposal which focused on improving reading, developing a professional library, and providing consultants to work with the teachers in the areas of phonics, reciprocal teaching, and textbook selection. Many teachers have completed graduate courses in reading. Recent professional development workshops involving information on and discussion of "a literacy rich environment' attended by our entire elementary faculty were with: Dr. Pamela Godt, Western Illinois University, Spring and Summer 1996 (several half-day sessions over this time period, most on-site, at least one at WIU), Patricia Cunningham, keynote speaker and small group presentation, Western Illinois University Literacy Conference, September 27, 1996, Katherine Ransom, full day on-site visit, Summer 1996. Individual or small groups of teachers at different times enroll in WIU graduate courses. Recent courses taken that had literacy environment components were:

Advanced Children's Literature, Spring 1996
Creative Writing in Elementary School, Spring 1994
Reading in the Content Areas, Spring 1995 & 1996
Reading in the Early Childhood Classroom, Summer 1997 (Note: One of our elementary classroom teachers has taught reading courses for WIU. She is an on-site resource person who willingly shares her expertise with her colleagues.)

The school librarian and the library aide provide ongoing teacher/student support by sponsoring the annual "Battle of the Books," weekly literature extension art activities during the class book check-out time, story read-alouds, a puppet theatre, annual "Book Week" activities, providing a display venue for class literature projects, and finding topical books for classroom units of study.

The Title I and Reading Improvement teachers support the classroom teachers by planning frequent all-school or multi-grade reading activities and events. These are highly motivating and lots of fun for teachers, students and their families. Some of these are "Friday Night Prime Time" (annual reading lock-in), costumed read-alouds (primary grade Title I teacher), weekly teacher read-alouds (Reading Improvement teacher), reading activities in conjunction with "Family Math Nights," themed activities for the RIF book distributions (every trimester), National Book Week activities, and read-a-thons.

The RIF (Reading Is Fundamental) program has been in the school for eleven years. The trimester book distributions and concurrent all-school theme reading activities support the teachers' ongoing efforts to immerse the students in books and reading activities.

The superintendent/principal has offered another kind of support for the teachers and these all-school reading events by being the "motivational reward" for the students achieving the set reading goal. In assemblies, he has dressed up and sang to the children, eaten cat food, and kissed a pig!

Resources

Professional development activities for a literacy-rich environment have been provided through funds from the local district, Goals 2000, Reading Improvement State Grant, Title I, Scientific Literacy Grant and individual teacher's coursework. Teachers pay for their own university coursework, however, many use tuition waivers earned from WIU for supervising WIU education students in their classrooms.

The Goals 2000 grant funded consultants and conference fees: Katherine Ransom - $1,000, Dr. Pamela Godt - $2,400, WIU Conference - $2,070. These consultants and conference fees included topics in addition to literacy rich environment. In recent years, the school district has funded approximately four teachers per year to attend the Illinois Reading Conference in Springfield which totals approximately $500. Costs for the PreKindergarten and Kindergarten teachers to attend the annual IASCD Kindergarten Conference are $500 and paid for with the PreKindergarten/PreSchool At-Risk Grant. The district's annual share of the costs for the RIF program is $250.

The support provided by the half-time reading improvement teacher and Title I teachers' aide are directly responsible for this best practice, however this is only part of their responsibilities. It is estimated that in addition to their salaries, approximately $2200 has been spent on materials. Supporting materials have also been purchased from many of the sources listed. Substitutes were provided for teachers to attend conferences. Teachers attended graduate classes during the evenings and on weekends. District in-service days have also been used to focus on the improvement of reading instruction.

For technology/equipment resources, V I T. has made a large investment in technology. The ratio of students to computers is small, plus much other technology hardware. The faculty is constantly receiving in-service training on how to use these resources to facilitate improved reading/writing instruction and learning. The school district employs a full-time technology specialist who makes this training possible.

Evidence of Success

Student performance has improved as indicated on the third and sixth grade IGAP and achievement test scores. The following illustrates the increase in IGAP reading scores from 1988-89 to 1995-96.

	3rd grade	6th grade
1988-89	230	285
1995-96	260	293

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Standardized Tests

Description of Best Practice 14: School/Family/Community Partnerships

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*

- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials

Implementation Strategies

V.I.T. Elementary School collaborates with its families and community members to support the literacy development of students. This focus on literacy is accomplished by hosting Family Math Nights, Read Across America activities, Reading Is Fundamental, Book Fairs, Homework Hangout, and Friday Night Prime Time as an all night reading "lock-in" for the upper elementary students.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Through the years, teachers have regularly attended the Illinois Reading Conference, IASCD Kindergarten Conference, Title I State Conference, and the Western Illinois University Reading Conference. The knowledge gained from attending these conferences is shared with other teachers in the elementary building during faculty meetings. Discussions during faculty meetings resulted in the submission and receipt of a Goals 2000 proposal, which focused on the improvement of reading in addition to developing a professional library to included journals such as *Reading Teacher, IRC Journal, Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, and Learning* magazine. The Goals 2000 proposal provided consultants to work with the teachers in the areas of phonics, reciprocal teaching with Katherine Ransom, and textbook selection. Many teachers have completed graduate courses in the area of reading through Western Illinois University.

During the aforementioned in-service workshops with Dr. Pamela Godt in 1996, the preschool and kindergarten teachers were able to plan a parent orientation program presented during an early childhood evening activity called "Circus Night." This orientation focused on parents regularly reading aloud to their children and how this would be expected and facilitated now that their child was in school. This focus on parents reading to their children has continued to be promoted at the annual early childhood "Penny Carnival."

Two teachers and our preschool parent liaison took a WIU graduate course in the spring of 1998 entitled Parent Involvement. As a part of this course work they are compiling and writing a new parent handbook for our school.

The preschool program employs a part-time parent liaison who provides onsite support for the preschool and kindergarten teachers. She also makes home visits to the preschoolers' homes helping the teachers initiate and foster a strong, supportive home/school relationship at the very beginning of the families' school experience. She has also helped the preschool teacher make "story sacks" to be taken home for parent/child reading.

The aforementioned WIU course, Advanced Children's Literature, has helped the teachers with lists of high quality books to give to parents for home reading and book selection. It also encouraged the teachers to make their classroom libraries a source of books to be checked out for home reading, supplementing the school library.

At the annual IASCD Kindergarten Conference and the annual Title I Conference there is always a presentation or two on "Parent Involvement." The early childhood and Title I teachers always attend for help with ongoing efforts and for new ideas for fostering home reading.

As previously mentioned, the Title I and Reading Improvement teachers support the classroom teachers by planning and staging frequent all-school reading events that often involve the families and/or the community, e.g., "Family Reading Night," "Read Across America," "Partners in Excellence," "600 Minute Club," and reading activities at "Family Math Night."

The RIF (Reading Is Fundamental) program offers home support by providing each child with a new book for their home collections three times every year.

Within the school community, the teachers receive welcomed support for the reading program from our junior/senior high school students. Several of the high school teachers have developed components in their courses that involve their students coming over to the elementary classrooms to assist the younger children and their teachers in reading and writing activities.

Resources

Elementary teachers have participated in professional development activities in order to provide a literacy-rich environment through the utilization of funds from the following: the local district Goals 2000 Grant, Reading Improvement State Grant, Title I Federal Grant, individual teachers paid for coursework, and Scientific Literacy Grant. The elementary teachers have worked with Katherine Ransom and professors from Western Illinois University. Supporting materials have also been purchased with money from many of the sources listed. Substitutes were provided in order for teachers to attend conferences.

District in-service days have also been used to focus on the improvement of reading instruction. Teachers attended graduate classes during the evenings and on weekends. Teachers pay for their own university coursework; however, many use tuition waivers earned from WIU for supervising WIU education students in their classrooms.

Parent involvement is often one of the sessions attended by teachers at conferences such as the IASCD Kindergarten Conference (cost approximately $500) and Title 1 conference (cost approximately $660. The Goals 2000 Grant funded the consultant fee of Dr. Pamela Godt ($2,400), which included the topic of Family/Community Partnerships in her workshops. A Pre-Kindergarten/Preschool At-Risk parent liaison provides services two days/week at an approximate cost of $5,400. In addition to the salaries of a half-time Reading Improvement Teacher and an Title I Aide, approximately $2200 has been spent on materials. The district's annual share of the costs for the RIF program is $250.

Evidence of Success

Success is evidenced by the increasing number of parents and community members that attend the various literacy school events in addition to the contributions made by individual community members and groups such as the Mothers' Club in purchasing reading materials. The school has been involved with RIF for eleven years where 75% of the funds to support the purchase of reading materials has been federally funded. Success is also measured by the increase in student performance indicated on the IGAP reading test and achievement tests.

	3rd grade	6th grade
1988-89	230	285
1995-96	260	293

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

VIT Community Unit School District 2
1502 East US 136
Table Grove, IL 61482
309/758-5138
309/758-5298 (fax)

WHEELING DISTRICT 21 / Longfellow School

Data on School Demographics
School Size/Enrollment 477 Grade levels K-5
District/School Type Suburban
Socioeconomic Level 16% low income
Ethnicity 80% white, 1% Afro-American
15% Hispanic

Data on Best Practices in Reading
Implemented at Grade Levels K-5
Best Practice 1 Word Analysis
Best Practice 10 Comprehension
Scope/Setting for the Practices School Wide

Description of District/School Wide Reading Program

Enhancing student achievement in reading, a target goal at Longfellow School, has and continues to be a central component of the school improvement plan. The staff, parents, district and school community, have developed and maintained a collaborative partnership to help each of our students achieve in reading. In addition to the establishment of a building Reading Task Force, the use of trained parent/community reading volunteers, Parent Education Reading Evenings, school-wide Celebration of Reading Days, Noon SST times, ongoing staff development, extended school-year programs, and participation in reading incentive programs, Longfellow's Reading Club program (which was implemented during the 1995-96 school year) has contributed significantly to the enhanced reading achievement of students. In conjunction with this program, all students in grades 1-5 receive 90-120 minutes a week of targeted, small group reading instruction (in addition to their regular homeroom-based reading program). During the reading club periods, homeroom teachers as well as our reading facilitator, library media center director, technology instructor and special education staff are used to provide students across the ability continuum with "scaffolded" reading/language arts experiences in small group structures.

Description of Best Practice 1: Explicit and Systematic Word Analysis Instruction, including Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency*
- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*
- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons.*
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.*
- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.*
- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Implementation Strategies

Teachers and facilitators provide students with direct, systematic instruction to build and enhance students' word analysis and word meaning skills. Specific instructional strategies include Word Sort, Word Banks, Echo Reading, Choral Reading, Repeated Readings, Context Clues, Structural Analysis, Mind Mapping and the Directed Spelling Thinking Activity (as developed by Dr. Jerry Zutell from Ohio State University). These occur during homeroom instructional periods, during reading club times and in one-to-one or small group settings with trained reading volunteers and paraprofessionals.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

In addition to staff development opportunities presented by Dr. Jerry Zutell and the district Director of Language Arts, our building maintains a school-based Reading Committee as well as membership on our district Reading Task Force. Staff development has involved hands-on workshops and presentations, peer mentoring, classroom demonstrations, and building and district meetings and discussions. Through multiple means, the entire staff has participated in reading staff development opportunities by attending district institute days, participating in building meetings and discussions, taking graduate classes, and attending state or local conferences.

Resources

Wheeling District #21 provided Dr. Zutell with a $5,000 honorarium for five days of staff development services over a two-year period. Teachers, facilitators and district personnel received training and attended meetings before or after school hours or on Institute days. Using these formats, no additional expenses were associated with the building and district staff. The district requested/encouraged all homeroom teachers and reading staff to attend and participate in these workshops which were voluntary. For technology/equipment as a resource, some reading-related software has been used, but a strong emphasis has been placed on direct teacher-student instruction and interaction.

Evidence of Success

Over 90% of students in grades K-5 have met or exceeded standards in sight word recognition and reading fluency as assessed by local curriculum-based measurements such as fluency scores, and performances on Morris and Schlagel Spelling Inventories as well as on standardized tests (Grades 3-5).

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

- ☒ Process Evaluation
- ☒ Performance Assessment
- ☒ Standardized Tests
- ☒ Pre - post Measures
- ☒ Teacher observation/reporting
- ☒ Other: CBMS

Description of Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension Skills and Strategies

English Language Arts Standards that this best practice addresses

STATE GOAL 1: *Read with understanding and fluency.*

- Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

STATE GOAL 2: *Read and understand literature of various societies, eras and ideas.*

- Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

STATE GOAL 3: *Write to communicate for a variety of reasons*

- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure
- Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences
- Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

STATE GOAL 4: *Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations*

- Listen effectively in formal and informal situations
- Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience

STATE GOAL 5: *Use language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information*

- Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas
- Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources
- Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats

Implementation Strategies

Teachers and facilitators provide students with opportunities to learn and apply comprehension strategies for predicting, constructing meaning, making inferences, summarizing, supporting responses with the text, using graphic organizers and self monitoring. Specific strategies and formats include those associated with the Junior Great Book Inquiry method and our District #21 Reading Task Force such as Literature Circles, Reflective Journaling, Paired, Partner and Choral Reading; Webbing; Story Mapping.

During instructional periods, students are asked to analyze their responses, finding specific support within or inferred by the text to support their reasoning. By modeling as well as helping students to develop their own metacognitive strategies, students become both more skilled and independent in regards to comprehension.

Teacher Support/Professional Development

In addition to approximately one quarter of the teachers participating in Junior Great Books Training during the 1997-98 school year, staff development opportunities were provided by our building reading committee, through sessions conducted by the Director of Language Arts and through participation on our District #21 Reading Task Force. In August of 1998, the remainder of the homeroom teaching staff participated in Junior Great Books training.

Resources

Teachers who attended the Junior Great Books training paid $99 each for the 2-day workshop. (Approximately $800 was spent from building staff development funds.) Junior Great Books materials were purchased by the district office out of block reading grant funds ($2,000). Substitute expenses ($75/day/teacher) were covered through the district professional development budget.

Evidence of Success

Over 85% of students in grades K-5 have met or exceeded standards in reading comprehension as assessed by local curriculum-based measurements (Grades K-5) and standardized tests (Grades 3-5).

Method(s) Used for Evidence of Success

☒ Process Evaluation ☒ Pre - post Measures ☒ Performance Assessment
☒ Teacher observation/reporting ☒ Standardized Tests

For more information, contact:

Longfellow School
Debra S. Rose, Principal
501 S. Arlington Heights Road
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
847/520-2814
847/419-3078 (fax)

Wheeling District #21
Dr. Lloyd (Bud) DesCarpentrie
999 W. Dundee Road
Wheeling, IL 60090
847/520-2755
847/419-3078 (fax)

Appendix A

Best Practices in Reading

Best Practice 1: Explicit Word Analysis Instruction, Including Phonics	Teachers provide explicit instruction, build word knowledge, and directly teach skills and strategies for word analysis (phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, structural analysis, context clues, vocabulary).
Best Practice 2: Assessment to Inform Instruction	Teachers routinely monitor and assess the reading levels and progress of individual students. This ongoing evaluation directs and informs instruction.
Best Practice 3: Instructional Planning	Teachers plan instruction considering three phases: before, during and after reading.
Best Practice 4: Collaboration and Reflection	Teachers routinely self-reflect and collaborate on instructional practices and student progress within school and/or district.
Best Practice 5: Learning Standards	Teachers facilitate conceptual knowledge of Illinois English Language Arts learning standards.
Best Practice 6: Independent Reading	Students have opportunities for sustained reading (oral and/or silent) every day to increase fluency and vocabulary.
Best Practice 7: Variety of Genre	Students have broad reading and writing experiences (multiple genre and styles). Reading to students at all grade levels is part of this broad experience.
Best Practice 8: Appropriate Instructional Levels	Students have opportunities to read at their instructional level every day.
Best Practice 9: Reading for Purpose	Students have extensive opportunities to read for a variety of purposes and to apply what is read every day. Discussion and writing are used by students to organize their thinking and they reflect on what they read for specific purposes.
Best Practice 10: Building Comprehension Skills and Strategies	Students are taught and given opportunities to apply the following comprehension strategies for constructing meaning: making and confirming predictions, visualizing, summarizing, drawing inferences, making connections, and self-monitoring.
Best Practice 11: Building Cognitive Skills and Strategies	Students are taught and given opportunities to use cognitive strategies to synthesize, analyze, evaluate and make applications to authentic situations.
Best Practice 12: Integration	Reading and writing are integrated and used as tools to support learning in all curricular content areas.
Best Practice 13: Literacy Rich Environment	Literacy rich environments display words and print everywhere, provide opportunities and tools that engage students in reading and writing activities, and celebrate students' reading and writing efforts. Each classroom has an extensive collection of reading materials with a wide range of high-interest fiction and non-fiction books at developmentally appropriate reading levels which motivates and supports reading and writing. The room design supports whole group, small group and individual instruction.
Best Practice 14: School / Family / Community Partnerships	Families, communities, and schools collaborate to support literacy development of students at home and school.

Appendix B

List of Leadership and Learning Sites in Reading

1 Adlai Stevenson HSD #125
One Stevenson Drive
Lincolnshire, IL 60069
Contact: Wendell Schwartz
Phone: 847/634-4000

2 Anna CCSD #37
Lincoln Elementary School
108 Warren Street
Anna, IL 62906
Contact: Karen Hubbs
Phone: 618/833-6851

3 Des Plaines Elementary SD #62
Plainfield School
777 Algonquin Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Contact: Maxine Hubbard
Phone: 847/824-1301

4 Downers Grove Community High School District #99
6301 Springside Avenue
Downers Grove, IL 60516
Contact: Wm. F. Renner
Phone: 630/271-6699

5 Edwardsville CUSD #7
Edwardsville Middle School
145 West Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025
Contact: Lynda Andre
Phone: 618/656-1182

6 Evanston CCSD #65
Martin Luther King Jr. Lab School
2424 Lake Street
Evanston, IL 60201
Contact: Lynn McCarthy
Phone: 847/492-7876

7 Harlem HSD #122
8615 North Second Street
Machesney Park, IL 61115
Contact: Lynn Gibson
Phone: 815/654-4500

8 LaHarpe CUSD #335
404 West Main Street
LaHarpe, IL 61450
Contact: Steven Breckon
Phone: 217/659-7739

9 Lockport Township HSD #205
1323 East 7th Street
Lockport, IL 60441
Contact: Richard Dittle
Phone: 815/588-8100

10 Monmouth District #38
325 South 11th Street
Monmouth, IL 61462
Contact: Donna McCaw
Phone: 309/734-2213

11 Mundelein HSD #120
1350 West Hawley Street
Mundelein, IL 60060
Contact: Sally Pilcher
Phone: 847/949-2200

12 Naperville District #203
River Woods School
203 West Hillside
Naperville, IL 60540
Contact: Joan Forman
Phone: 630/420-6630

13 Palatine CCSD #15
Central Road School
3800 Central Road
Palatine, IL 60067
Contact: Jill Weininger
Phone: 847/965-5100

14 Palatine CCSD #15
Jane Addams School
1020 Sayles Drive
Palatine, IL 60067
Contact: Charles Accardi
Phone: 847/963-5000

15 Palatine CCSD #15
Lake Louise School
500 North Jonathan
Palatine, IL 60067
Contact: Cheryl A. Kmiecik
Phone: 847/963-5600

16 Plainfield Con. HSD #202
500 West Fort Beggs Drive
Plainfield, IL 60544
Contact: Eve Panice
Phone: 815/439-3240

17 Riverside PSD #96
63 Woodside Road
Riverside, IL 60546
Contact: Linda Farley
Phone: 708/447-0759

18 Springfield District #186
Fairview School
2200 Ridgely Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702
Contact: Linda Johnson
Phone: 217/525-3211

19 Springfield District #186
Hay Edwards School
Phone: 708/447-0759
400 West Lawrence
Springfield, IL 62704
Contact: Shari Hibbert
Phone: 217/525-3220

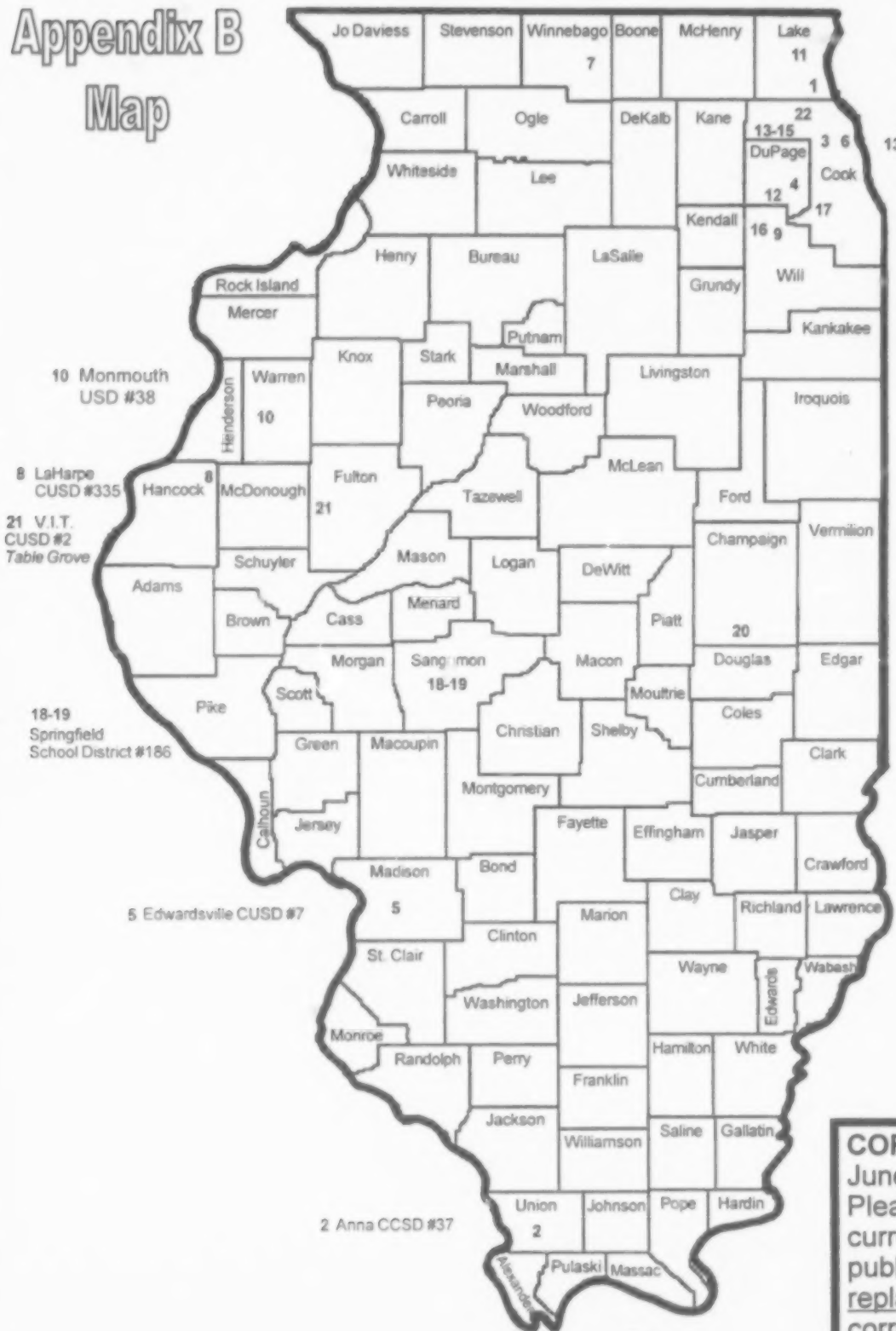
20 Tolono CUSD #7
Sidney Grade School
P.O. Box 590
Sidney, IL 61877
Contact: Mary Weaver
Phone: 217/688-2821

21 V.I.T. CUSD #2
1502 East US 136
Table Grove, IL 61482
Phone: 309/758-5138

22 Wheeling District #21
Longfellow School
999 W. Dundee Road
Wheeling, IL 60090
Contact: Debra S. Rose
Phone: 847/537-8270

Leadership and Learning Sites

Appendix B Map



7 Harlem HSD #122
11 Mundelein HSD #120
1 Adlai Stevenson HSD #125 *Lincolnshire*
22 Wheeling CCSD #21
13-15 Palatine CCSD #15
3 Des Plaines Elem. SD #62
6 Evanston CCSD #65
4 Downers Grove CHSD #99
12 Naperville CUD #203
17 Riverside PSD #96
16 Plainfield Con.HSD #202
9 Lockport Township HSD #205

CORRECTED MAP
June 8, 1999
Please remove the current map in the publication and replace with this corrected version.

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Appendix C

Learning and Leadership Schools for Best Practices in Reading – Summary Matrix

Location (see Appendix B for Contact Information)	Type of District/School	Geographic Area	Best Practices		Methods for Sharing with Other Illinois Schools			
					Host Site Visit	Mentor Other Schools	Present at local or regional conferences/meetings	Provide school or regional workshops
Adlai Stevenson	High School	North	3	4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anna	Elementary	South	3	8	✓		✓	✓
DesPlaines - Plainfield	Elementary	Chicago Suburb	4	9	✓	✓	✓	✓
Downers Grove	High School	Chicago Suburb	2	10	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edwardsville	Middle School	South	7	9	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evanston - ML King	Elementary	North	1	12	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harlem	Elementary	Rockford Area	1	2				
LaHarpe	Elementary	West Central	7	8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lockport	High School	Joliet Area	3	4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monmouth	Elementary	West Central	2	6	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mundelein	High School	North	4	5	✓	✓	✓	✓
Naperville - River Woods	Elementary	Chicago Suburb	2	6	✓		✓	
Palatine – Central Rd. Sch.	Elementary	Chicago Suburb	3	10	✓		✓	
Palatine – Jane Addams	Elementary	Chicago Suburb	10	12				
Palatine – Lake Louise	Elementary	Chicago Suburb	1	10	✓			✓
Plainfield	High School	Joliet Area	6	7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Riverside – Ames	Elementary	Chicago suburb	1	2	✓		✓	
Springfield - Hay Edwards	Elementary	Central	1	13				
Springfield – Fairview	Elementary	Central	1	6	✓	✓		
Tolono – Sidney	Elementary	East Central	12	14	✓	✓	✓	✓
VIT	Elementary	West Central	13	14	✓		✓	
Wheeling – Longfellow	Elementary	Chicago suburb	1	10	✓	✓	✓	

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Reading Best Practice On-Site Summary Form – (Facsimile)

District Name _____ School Name _____

Recommended to serve as a demonstration site ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is implemented as described in grant ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible, attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 1 Explicit Word Analysis Instruction Including Phonics

Teachers provide explicit instruction, build word knowledge, and directly teach skills and strategies for word analysis (phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, structural analysis, context clues, vocabulary) with and without the use of text

Possible Strategies

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Word walls
- ☐ Word webs
- ☐ Songs
- ☐ Charts
- ☐ Context clues
- ☐ Highlighting texts by framing, pointing, sentence strips, and/or innovation
- ☐ Poems
- ☐ Nursery rhymes
- ☐ Discussions on familiar topics
- ☐ Etymologies, suffixes, prefixes and roots
- ☐ Compare/contrast
- ☐ Word analysis
- ☐ Dictionary use
- ☐ Making words
- ☐ Graphic organizers
- ☐ Listening and oral reproduction tasks for phonemic awareness
- ☐ Explicit telling of sounds and letters
- ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

_____

Best Practice 2 Assessment to Inform Instruction

Teachers routinely monitor and assess the reading levels and progress of individual students. This ongoing evaluation directs and informs instruction

- ☐ Running Records
- ☐ Portfolios
- ☐ Reading logs
- ☐ Work sampling
- ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

- ☐ Illinois Student Profile
- ☐ Student led conferences
- ☐ Anecdotal records/notes
- ☐ Read aloud books of student choice
- ☐ Literature response journals
- ☐ Learning logs
- ☐ Observation checklists
- ☐ Interest inventories
- ☐ Miscue analysis
- ☐ Standardized assessment
- ☐ Individual/group reading inventories (identify)

_____

Notes/Observations:

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Reading Best Practice On-Site Summary Form

District Name _____ School Name _____

Recommended to serve as a demonstration site ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is implemented as described in grant ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible; attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 3 Instructional Planning

Teachers plan instruction considering three phases: before, during and after reading

Possible Strategies

(Check all that apply)

- KWL
- Integrated units
- Thematic units
- Read alouds
- Questioning the author
- Conceptual change activities
- Guided Reading
- Directed reading, thinking, listening (DRTL)
- Reciprocal teaching
- Mind maps
- Anticipation guide
- Graphic organizers, e.g., Venn diagrams
- CRISS (Creating Independence Through Student Known Strategies)
- PReP techniques
- Story impressions
- Study guides
- Other (specify)

_____

_____

_____

Notes/Observations:

Best Practice 4 Collaboration and Reflection

Teachers routinely self-reflect and collaborate on instructional practices and student progress within school and/or district

Possible Strategies

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Shared planning time
- ☐ Shared learning experiences, e.g., classes, workshops
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Teachers evaluate/ interview student work together
- ☐ Teacher exchange days
- ☐ Grade level meetings
- ☐ Multi-grade level meetings
- ☐ Study groups
- ☐ Action research
- ☐ Reading curriculum workshops
- ☐ Peer coaching
- ☐ Group discussions of student work
- ☐ Teacher participation in seminars on professional readings
- ☐ Team teaching
- ☐ Other (specify)

Notes/Observations

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Reading Best Practice On-Site Summary Form

District Name _____ School Name _____

Recommended to serve as a demonstration site ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is implemented as described in grant ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible; attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 5 Learning Standards

Teachers facilitate conceptual knowledge of Illinois English Language Arts learning standards

Possible Strategies (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Formal process to align curriculum and instruction to standards
- ☐ Standards posted in classrooms
- ☐ Student articulation of what they are learning (refer to standards)
- ☐ Faculty study groups on standards
- ☐ Student progress is reported by standards
- ☐ Other (specify) _____ _____ _____

Notes/Observations:

Best Practice 6 Independent Reading

Students have opportunities for sustained reading at their independent level every day to increase fluency and vocabulary

Possible Strategies (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Sustained silent reading
- ☐ DEAR periods
- ☐ Paired/partner reading
- ☐ RIF (Reading is Fundamental)
- ☐ Read and relax
- ☐ Other (specify) _____ _____

Notes/Observations:

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Reading Best Practice On-Site Summary Form

District Name _____ School Name _____

Recommended to serve as a demonstration site ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is implemented as described in grant ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible, attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 7 Variety of Genre

Students have broad reading and writing experiences (multiple genre and styles). Reading to students at all grade levels is part of this broad experience.

Possible Strategies (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Shared book experience
- ☐ Classroom publishing
- ☐ Sustained silent reading/DEAR
- ☐ Journal writing
- ☐ Debate
- ☐ Dialogue journals
- ☐ Integrated or thematic units
- ☐ Literature circles
- ☐ Daily teacher read alouds
- ☐ Readers theatre
- ☐ Choral reading
- ☐ Radio reading
- ☐ Oral interpretation
- ☐ Reading workshop
- ☐ Writing workshop
- ☐ Spelling workshop
- ☐ Drama/Play
- ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

Notes/Observations:

Best Practice 8 Appropriate Instructional Levels

Students have opportunities to read at their instructional level every day.

Possible Strategies (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Shared book experience
- ☐ Rereading whole text
- ☐ Paired partner reading
- ☐ Choral reading
- ☐ Radio reading
- ☐ Echo reading
- ☐ Fluency assessment
- ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

Notes/Observations:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Reading Best Practice On-Site Summary Form

District Name _____ School Name _____

Recommended to serve as a demonstration site ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is implemented as described in grant ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible; attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 9 Reading for Purpose

Students have extensive opportunities to read for a variety of purposes and to apply what is read every day. Discussion and writing are used by students to organize their thinking and they reflect on what they read for specific purposes.

Possible Strategies (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Shared book experience
- ☐ Classroom publishing
- ☐ Sustained silent reading/DEAR
- ☐ Journal writing
- ☐ Dialogue journals
- ☐ Integrated or thematic units
- ☐ Literature circles
- ☐ Radio reading
- ☐ Daily teacher read alouds
- ☐ Readers theatre
- ☐ Choral reading
- ☐ Junior Great Books
- ☐ Other (specify) _____ _____ _____

Notes/Observations:

Best Practice 10 Building Comprehension Strategies

Students are taught and given opportunities to apply comprehension strategies for constructing meaning including making and confirming predictions, visualizing, summarizing, drawing inferences, making connections, and self-monitoring.

Possible Strategies (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Semantic mapping
- ☐ ReQuest procedure
- ☐ Venn diagram
- ☐ Anticipation guide
- ☐ Think alouds
- ☐ RAFTs (Role, Audience, Format, Topic)
- ☐ Reader response/ journaling
- ☐ GIST (summary)
- ☐ Reciprocal Teaching
- ☐ Mind maps
- ☐ Character webs
- ☐ Story maps
- ☐ Story impressions
- ☐ Summary/re-telling
- ☐ Identifying with character
- ☐ QARS
- ☐ Guided reading technique
- ☐ Note-taking
- ☐ Plot relationship charts
- ☐ Story pyramid
- ☐ Story frame
- ☐ Teacher or student led discussion
- ☐ CRISS
- ☐ Repeated reading
- ☐ Study skills
- ☐ Repeated reading
- ☐
- ☐ Other (specify) _____ _____ _____

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Reading Best Practice On-Site Summary Form

District Name _____ School Name _____

Recommended to serve as a demonstration site ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is implemented as described in grant ☐ Yes ☐ No

Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible, attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 11: Building Cognitive Skills and Strategies

Students are taught and given opportunities to synthesize, analyze, evaluate and make applications of what they read and write to authentic situations

Possible Strategies
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ ReQuest procedure
- ☐ Literature circles
- ☐ Reciprocal teaching
- ☐ DR-TA (Directed Reading - Thinking Act)
- ☐ Think alouds
- ☐ Guided reading procedure
- ☐ Junior Great Books
- ☐ Shared journal writing
- ☐ Writing response to literature
- ☐ Study guides
- ☐ SQ3R (Study, Questioning, Reading, Review, Recite)
- ☐ Other (specify)
  _____
  _____
  _____

Notes/Observations:

Best Practice 12: Integration

Reading and writing are integrated and used as tools to support learning in all curricular content areas

Possible Strategies
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Author's Chair
- ☐ Peer conferencing
- ☐ Classroom or school publishing
- ☐ Integrated or thematic units
- ☐ Language experience approach
- ☐ CRISS
- ☐ Book/magazine review
- ☐ Reading workshop
- ☐ Writing workshop
- ☐ Reading documents
- ☐ Other (specify)
  _____
  _____
  _____

Notes/Observations:

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Practice is internalized in instructional design by frequency and design ☐ Yes ☐ No

High Impact/Interesting Strategy (Describe as completely as possible; attach evidence if available)

Best Practice 13: Literacy Rich Environment

Literacy rich environments display words and print everywhere, provide opportunities and tools that engage students in reading and writing activities, and celebrate students' reading and writing efforts. Each classroom has an extensive collection of reading materials with a wide range of high-interest fiction and non-fiction books which motivates and supports reading and writing at a variety of levels. The room design supports whole group, small group and individual instruction.

Possible Strategies

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Comprehensive classroom libraries: newspapers, magazines, poetry, high interest leveled books for all abilities, interests and content areas
- ☐ Environmental print in classrooms and building
- ☐ Chairs, tables, computers and other equipment allows flexibility for whole class groups, small heterogeneous groups, cooperative learning, individual work
- ☐ Student work displayed in classrooms and throughout the school
- ☐ Special projects, programs or events, e.g. assemblies, poetry reading
- ☐ Word of the day
- ☐ Internet access
- ☐ Resource books, child created books, comic books, menus, technical books
- ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

_____

Notes/Observations:

Best Practice 14: Family/ Community Partnerships

Families, communities and schools collaborate to support the literacy development of students

Possible Strategies

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Reading tutors
- ☐ Cross-age reading groups/buddies
- ☐ Service learning via classroom integrated into writing and reading
- ☐ Homework assistance (telephone, computer, etc.)
- ☐ Celebrity reading days
- ☐ Book talks
- ☐ Business and community organizations provide incentives for reading
- ☐ Community based extended reading program
- ☐ Access to books that can be taken home
- ☐ Park district/summer reading program
- ☐ Building wide thematic program focusing on author/genre
- ☐ Education-to-career
- ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

_____

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Classroom Observation Prompts

What does the physical environment of the classroom look like?

- ✓ Classroom library (number of books per student)
- ✓ Comfortable furniture
- ✓ _____
- ✓ Stations for independent/shared reading/listening etc
- ✓ Print at eye level
- ✓ _____

What does the student work look like? Where is it posted? How is it used?

What is the overall climate of the classroom?

What is the students' attitude?

How are students grouped?

- ✓ Whole class
- ✓ Individual read time
- ✓ Project work/students work cooperatively
- ✓ Small group
- ✓ Activities selected by students
- ✓ Work at chalkboard
- ✓ Independent seat work
- ✓ Games/physical activities
- ✓ _____

How many students are engaged? Disengaged?

What is the main idea used during the lesson?

What is the relationship between the teacher and the student?

What is the pace of instruction?

How does the teacher transition from lesson to lesson or activity to activity?

How does the teacher make use of time?

What is the instructional activity?

- ✓ Independent reading
- ✓ Print awareness
- ✓ Relationship between letters and words
- ✓ Sounding out new words
- ✓ Fluency Practice
- ✓ Comprehension activities
- ✓ Reading aloud by children
- ✓ Study Skills
- ✓ _____
- ✓ Phonemic awareness
- ✓ Knowledge of alphabetic principle
- ✓ Understanding the building blocks of language
- ✓ Spelling
- ✓ Practice writing letters
- ✓ Multiple cueing systems
- ✓ Vocabulary
- ✓ Debate
- ✓ _____
- ✓ Knowledge of alphabet
- ✓ Phonics
- ✓ Reading aloud to children
- ✓ Decoding
- ✓ Writing practice
- ✓ Word recognition
- ✓ Graphic Organizers
- ✓ Literature Circles
- ✓ _____

What materials are used?

- ✓ Trade books
- ✓ Decodable text
- ✓ Computer applications
- ✓ Flashcards
- ✓ Books on tape
- ✓ Paper, drawing, writing materials
- ✓ Teacher guides
- ✓ Technology
- ✓ Basal readers
- ✓ Worksheets/workbooks
- ✓ Overheads
- ✓ _____

Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.state.il.us

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